MEMOIRS OF MONSIEUR CLAUDE

TRANSLATED BY KATHERINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY:

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MEMOIRS
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CHIEF OF POLICE

UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE

Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

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NOTE

THESE *Memoirs have been condensed in the present edition. Many parts of them are long out of date ; such, for instance, as the chapters on police regulations and the prisons of Paris ; while the police reports and* procès-verbaux *are as dull reading as the daily records of the Old Bailey.*

But the historical parts, the underside of well-known events and persons during the reign of Louis-Philippe and the Second Empire, are valuable, curious, and very interesting. The book was published in 1881, *and the London* Spectator, *when reviewing it in the summer of that year, said that it was perfectly trustworthy, and that its statements had not been refuted.*

These Memoirs are in ten volumes. The present volume condenses five, bringing the story down to the end of the Empire. The remaining volumes relate to the siege of Paris and the Commune. M. Claude resigned his post in 1876.

K. P. W.

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MEMOIRS

CHAPTER I

MY YOUTH AND MY VOCATION

I WAS born at Toul (Meurthe), on the 17th of October, 1807, of an honourable family, though limited in means. I am proud of my town, which resisted the Prussian invasion. I am glad to belong to a population which carried its respect for duty up to heroism, and its contempt of danger to the very limit of courage. I may add that I take pleasure in attributing those gifts, if I have shown them in my long and difficult career, to my brave co-citizens, whose glorious history is written on their ramparts.

The limited means of my family obliged me to leave my province early in life, to make for myself an independent existence. Anxious to remain as short a time as possible at the cost of my parents, who had given me a good and careful education, I left Toul when nineteen years of age and went to Paris.

In this I was less guided by ambition than by the wish to make myself a lucrative career; which, in those days, the provinces could not offer to a young man like me, whose education had been above his situation. I brought with me a recommendation to a friend of my family, M. de L——, a man of independent means and

social position in Paris. By him I was at once placed in the office of an attorney.

I was not precisely on the road to fortune; sitting from morning till night at a desk, copying deeds, verifying records, unless I were carrying files of papers to and fro between the attorney's office in the Palais de Justice and its clients — a gutter-jumping employment which was not to my taste. With an inquiring mind, very fond of the exciting and the unexpected, under an external appearance of easy good-nature, I hated this life of a squirrel's whirligig, which stretched my legs and paralysed my imagination.

Nevertheless, I remained three years a lawyer's clerk. From gutter-jumper I rose to the rank of second clerk; and there I might have remained indefinitely if certain aptitudes of mine had not shown themselves in time to assign me another mission. Chance put me in the way to find my true vocation, and to prove to my comrades that nature had endowed me with a faculty of observation which would make me, in time, a skilful policeman.

This chance, which decided my vocation, I owe to a man afterwards very celebrated in the annals of crime. It happened in 1829, of a Saturday. I had been invited, with a score of other clerks from the offices of notaries and attorneys, to a Pantagruelian dinner, given by a future neophyte. This young man, I was told, was the son of a rich merchant in the provinces. After spending in Paris all the money he could get from his father, he was now obliged to employ his brilliant faculties in some profession. Being very intimate with certain law-

yer's clerks, he was enabled by them to enter their patron's office, as he had already given some time in the provinces to the study of law. By way of gratitude, he was now to spend his last francs in a farewell feast to his turbulent youth, given to his friends in the notary's office which he was about to enter. A few attorney's clerks were added to the number of his guests, among whom I had the honour of admission.

I had not, hitherto, known my host, whom his friends, out of respect, they said, for his family during the period of his dissipated life, called George. I was all the more curious to know him because my friends had represented him to me as a hero.

"If he does not, as yet," they added, "make known his family name, it is less because he dreads paternal anger at his peccadilloes — very excusable at his age — than because he fears the police. They have had their eyes on him ever since he killed his adversary, a traitor to France, in a duel, and thus proclaimed, in a threatening way for the government, his opinions as a Carbonaro."

France was just then on the eve of Charles X's *ordonnances*, and the Opposition were making demigods of the Carbonari. The French Bar was not backward in exhibiting its preferences for the Opposition, which promised to young lawyers a far more brilliant career than that of mere defenders of the widow and orphan.

In 1829 politics were everywhere; even the snuff-boxes and the hats were adorned with portraits of Lafitte, Benjamin Constant, Dupont de l'Eure, and

Lafayette. In every café and every restaurant the customers were assorted according to their ways of thinking; and each was on its guard against its adversaries. It goes without saying that the clerks of notaries and attorneys, the least well paid and well treated of the judicial hierarchy, were all, to a man, in the ranks of the Opposition.

As for me, an ardent apostle of liberty, I considered it a great privilege to be invited to meet this hero, this martyr to his opinions. The duel raised him to a pinnacle in my young imagination. I was prepared to follow him with enthusiasm even before I saw him.

The dinner was given at the *Veau qui tète* [Sucking Calf], a restaurant then in vogue. The giver of the feast was a young man about twenty-five years of age; fair, graceful, elegant, with a smiling face set off by a silky moustache, without which he might have passed for a woman in disguise, or a schoolboy. He was excessively thin, but the frail body, so delicate in appearance, covered a robust constitution, judging by the suppleness of his limbs, and the strong play of his muscles. A man who sat beside him, and appeared to be his chosen comrade, was, on the contrary, a stout fellow, whose burly figure made the slender proportions of his friend the more noticeable; nevertheless, this stoutness showed more weakness than strength, a constitution ravaged by excesses, and threatened with plethora. He seemed the type of an army officer degraded to the ranks. His name was Bégand, and, like his friend George, he came from Lyons.

As the dinner went on, passing through the various discordant phases of jollity, I watched with more and more curiosity the two chief leaders of the feast. Lawyers' clerks are, as a rule, very easily excited by the blood of the vine. I noticed that George, from the moment when his guests began to sway, kept perfect possession of himself, in spite of the bottles before him. Yet he drank, and drank steadily. It is true, however, that he scarcely touched the dishes as they were passed to him. His comrade, on the contrary, ate enormously, and drank all the more to stimulate his gluttony.

Towards the end of the dinner, I observed that the more the face of Bégand flushed, the more that of George turned livid. I then perceived that his gentle, almond-shaped eyes, the pupils of which had hitherto been bathed in a sort of magnetic fluid, were now shining with the brilliancy of steel. His brows were knit and lowered in a threatening manner. His lips had a savage grin; and the young man who, at the beginning of the meal, wore the head of an angel, at its close had the face of a hyena.

A strange thing now happened to me. As the man became transformed, or rather, as the mask fell from him, I became conscious that I myself was no longer the same. An evil influence acted upon me. This man, who had been depicted to me as a hero, I now saw for what he was — a criminal. The odour of blood that exhaled from all his pores intoxicated me far more than the wine that I had drunk. I felt myself stirred by an instinct against that malefic nature, as a shepherd's dog

smells the wolf that is roaming round the flock. These magnetic impressions, these luminous perceptions, have, since then, often come to me at the sight or the contact of an evildoer; in fact, without depending upon them, they have been a great help to me in my delicate and difficult investigations. I admit that on this occasion these impressions, which I felt for the first time, bewildered me; and, not understanding the instinctive horror I felt for this George, whom my friends thought a demigod, I was angry with myself for my assumptions.

In order to get rid of this mirage in my mind, which might be, after all, a veil of intoxication, I listened attentively to what he was saying. Without being, according to the consecrated word of that day, as *ému* as his guests, he was certainly excited by the champagne, and I soon saw that he was taking delight in gaining, by his cynical remarks, the admiration of those around him. I also saw that the fat Bégand, who sat beside him, was *claqueur* to this orator, who posed as a wit.

At that period everything was discussed and argued — religion, social matters, the family. Young men, who personally had no knowledge of the past miseries of the country, were amazed that France should have reverted to her monarchical traditions. A toast was drunk to the "Return of Liberty," to which George responded as follows:

"Gentlemen, I drink to my former companions in pleasure; to my new associates in work; all of them victims, like myself, of the inequality of social conditions. Entering, as I now do, the pale of the bourgeois

magistracy, — as narrow-minded and as stupid as all the other castes, — I drink to the future that will avenge us — us, the pariahs of civilization! As for me, I have struggled, I am vanquished! One consolation is mine. I have not surrendered without having fought valiantly!"

"True! true!" cried the fat Bégand. "We know you, George! You are stalwart! You have proved your metal! We all remember your duel with the nephew of Benjamin Constant!"

At that name I shuddered. My singular impressions were confirmed. Until then, my friends, when lauding their future neophyte, had not named his adversary. But all the particulars of the duel with Benjamin Constant's nephew were known to me. He, being the insulted party, fired first, and fired wide of his adversary. The latter took his time, aimed deliberately, and shot young Constant dead, through the right breast. This duel, considered by the moderate liberals a murder, was called by the ultra-radicals a just vengeance. When I saw my comrades acclaiming a man who was nothing less than a murderer, I looked about me to escape an orgy that filled me with disgust. At this moment the man himself broke up the feast. Ordering their glasses filled for the last time, he rose and said:

"My friends, now that I quit the world of idlers and enter with you the class of earners, I shall no longer have the silly vanity to conceal my patronymic. My name is Lacenaire."

That name, which was not yet blasted, but which was destined to inspire the coming generation with

legitimate horror, sounded in my ears like a funeral knell. On leaving the restaurant of the *Veau qui tète*, I felt as if some enormous weight were lifted off me. My companions reproached me for not showing sufficient enthusiasm at the manner with which this charming fellow had buried, with such perfect grace, his life of a man of pleasure.

"Friends," I said, carried away by my physiological impressions, "this Lacénaire, in spite of his smiling face and his loquacity, — more cynical than witty, — shows nothing good to me. Behind the mask of a gentle, affectionate man he has the face of a wild beast. My eyes have seen him such as he is — an enemy to society. His features are handsome, I admit; their expression is horrible. If his head is deceptive, his hand, which I have closely examined, is not. That hand, with its thin, flat fingers, enlarged at their extremities like the heads of young reptiles, exhibits to me the creeping cruelty of the individual. I tell you that that man will not enter your notary's office next Monday. And I 'll tell you more — before long you will hear much about him. He has killed, and he will kill."

At these words, which I regretted as soon as I had said them, my comrades declared I was crazy; they laughed at me. But one, the head clerk in the notary's office, was very angry, and called me a calumniator.

Two days later they laughed no longer. Lacénaire did not enter the notary's office; and on Tuesday morning the safe was found to have been partly broken open during the night. The thieves, alarmed probably by

some unexpected noise, had left the office without securing the very considerable property contained in the safe. Suspicion naturally fell on the young man who had so won the confidence of the head clerk that the latter recommended him for a position in the office, which he had frequently visited while the matter was being negotiated.

A few months later, Lacenaire, before becoming the odious assassin of the rue Montorgueil, was arrested for theft at the Café de la Bourse. The news of this robbery, committed by the brilliant amphitryon of the *Veau qui tète*, caused a certain excitement in the legal world. The head clerk who had called me a calumniator never ceased to extol my perspicacity, which he declared was witchcraft. He told the story on all sides until it reached the ears of the head clerk of the Criminal Court of the Tribunal of the Seine. That official, perceiving that I might become a very precious employé in his department, made me proposals which I accepted. Little did I think that my instinctive perceptions at the *Veau qui tète* were to open to me the doors of the Prefecture. I now entered them as a humble clerk; I was on my true ground; and I owed it to Lacenaire, thief, forger, and murderer!

CHAPTER II

SECRET SOCIETIES AND THE POLICE UNDER THE REIGN OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE

AFTER the revolution of 1830, I rose from the position of recording clerk to that of deputy clerk of the Court of the Seine. There I performed the functions, without having the title, of clerk of the criminal and detective police courts [*greffier d'instruction criminelle*]. I owed this rise partly to my zeal and my natural fitness for the work, and partly to political events.

At this epoch, constitutional monarchy, which, in the words of a celebrated personage, was the "best of republics," needed energetic and judicious men to restrain, in the interests of a power seeking peace, impatient minds from forcing the realization of the programme of the Charter. In spite of the easy, good-natured disposition of the Citizen-King, Louis-Philippe, he was exposed, from the moment he mounted the throne, to the rancours of all parties which did not even recoil before the horrors of civil war. To protect himself, His Majesty summoned around him the men who were most interested in maintaining the privileges which the revolution of July had sought to suppress. I, myself, was under a magistrate who continued to perform the same

part he had formerly played under the "monarchy of divine right." The police service was strengthened, both at the Prefecture and at the Ministry of the Interior, by the vigilant care of Casimir Périer [President of the Council of Ministers]. The *cabinet noir*, suppressed for a time in 1830, was re-established by General Sebastiani, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The revolutionary movements which broke out in all the countries of Europe, starting from Paris and its secret societies (in which Republicans, Bonapartists, and Legitimists were plotting in their several ways), necessitated the creation of a new staff for the *cabinet noir*, the functions of which did not cease until the overthrow of Louis-Philippe in 1848.

In this connection, I must tell of a celebrated man, Raspail — François Vincent Raspail — President of the Society of the *Amis du Peuple* [Friends of the People]. Citizen Raspail, chemist, vegetable physiologist, and artilleryman, had played a very important part among the adversaries of Charles X's "ordinances." After that he allowed himself to be forgotten by the *camarilla* in the Laffitte salons, only, however, to reappear with vigour as a journalist, notably in the *Tribune*, and in political letters which he fulminated against the new government. Everybody read, eagerly, his articles against his late friends and associates who, in one night, had wriggled into a "court-dress." The *cabinet noir* was crammed with his letters against the King, who, he said, "was none of his choosing."

The Citizen King, who sought for partisans, not for

adversaries, became much alarmed by Raspail's letters, copies of which rained upon him daily from the *cabinet noir*, and he said to Montalivet, then Minister of the Interior:

"Good God! what does the man want?"

"Sire," replied the Minister, "probably, like all the other heroes of July, he wants the cross of the Legion of Honour."

"Then give it to him," cried the King, "and let me have peace!"

Nothing further was said about Raspail between the King and his Minister, but the latter did not allow those august words to drop. On the morrow Raspail, Friend of the People, democratic artilleryman, proprietor of the *Tribune*, head of a secret society, received a huge official document. Supposing it to be a summons or an injunction, he threw it on his desk and began to think of preparing for incarceration. But when, after a time, he opened the missive, words could not express the amazement with which he read as follows:

Monsieur, — I have the honour to announce to you that, by ordinance under date March 13, 1831, the King, at my suggestion, has appointed you Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. The Grand Chancellor of the Order will at once send you a duplicate of this announcement of your appointment.

(Signed) MONTALIVET.

Open-mouthed, his eyes bulging from their sockets, Raspail turned and re-turned this letter, to see if the

date were not April 1 instead of March 13. The Republican, expecting fetters, received the cross of honour! He immediately wrote a reply to the Minister, which did not need to go through the *cabinet noir*, for he took care to send it simultaneously to all the newspapers of the Opposition. In it the President of the "Friends of the People" said, among other amiabilities, that the Government, "despairing of winning a citizen through his conscience, took him by the buttonhole."

But between the reception of the official letter and its answer a ministerial crisis had occured, and Casimir Périer succeeded Montalivet. When the public refusal of the Friend of the People appeared, Casimir Périer exclaimed, with his natural stiffness and obstinacy:

"Very good: let Raspail choose — the cross of the Legion of Honour or imprisonment in a dungeon."

Three days later the official announcement of his appointment appeared in the *Moniteur*. Furious, Raspail went to the office of the *Moniteur* to insist on the insertion of his refusal. The editor told him, suavely, that his paper could not thus insult the noble institution of the Legion of Honour.

He had scarcely returned to his own office before he received a courteous letter from the Prefect of the Seine, saying that he "would have the honour of receiving Monsieur Raspail as Chevalier of the Legion of Honour on the following Friday, at midday."

This was dreadful: surely this excess of official graciousness was degenerating into sarcasm.

He was on his way to the Hôtel de Ville to inform the Prefect in person that he would *not* be thus received, when he was met by a congratulatory deputation of the *dames de la halle* [market-women], who flung themselves and a huge bouquet into the arms of the new Knight of Honour. But even this was not the worst; he was destined to drink that dreadful cup to the dregs! He, who saw Jesuits everywhere, and despised priests as much as he did the Legion of Honour, received a charming letter from Bishop Gringoire, Commander of the Order, claiming priority in the honourable appointment, on which he congratulated him. A bishop congratulating Raspail! Surely this was the acme of sarcasm — it was worse than imprisonment!

But Casimir Périer was not the man, any more than Raspail, to give way. "Cross or prison," said the Minister. If the chemist would not take the cross, the artilleryman should be punished. A week later Raspail was summoned before the examining judge at the Prefecture to explain why he had refused to serve in the artillery since General Loban had ordered him to patrol the faubourgs and prevent the assembling of mobs; and why he had issued incendiary writings against the new social order.

It was now, at the beginning of my career as clerk of the court, that I first knew Raspail. When I saw him enter the courtroom to undergo examination, I was struck by the aspect of this vigorous southerner, in whom a crafty shrewdness vied with ferocious energy. A clerk of the court is not a mere scrivener, not a

record-book, nor an automedon whose mechanism the judge sets going; he is, before all else, an observer. I soon saw in the accused and in the judge two athletes; the former sitting as haughtily on his bench as the latter in his armchair.

Though they were placed at two ends of the social ladder, the first seemed to me very capable of tipping that ladder over and of changing abruptly the position of the other. It was a war of words between the two men, in which the wily frankness of the accused fought the apparent *bonhomie* of the judge. I admired the vigorous language, wholly without artifice, of Raspail, while the judge was doing his best to conceal his thoughts. Raspail avoided all traps by jumping over them. Instead of hiding his power and his actions, he exaggerated them; and I, who watched the two men, thought there was as much shrewdness and calculation in the mind of the accused as in that of the judge.

Each started from an opposite point of view to reach a different end. The magistrate endeavoured not to exasperate a man who was dangerous to the Government; the other was bent on proving to the defender of law and order that he was more to be feared than they thought him. Both were before an altar that neither believed in — that of an hermaphrodite monarchy; which the judge would fain have seen legitimist; and Raspail regarded as a mere step to his republic.

That was the opinion I formed while performing my duty as clerk, turning my eyes from one to the other as they spoke, and writing down their words.

When the examination was over — in which Raspail declared his full responsibility for the articles in the *Tribune*, and scornfully blamed the artillery staff that appealed to the civil law against his actions — the judge asked if he would sign his declaration.

"Willingly, monsieur," he replied, casting a glance over my papers, "very willingly, and with both hands."

Proud of the position in which he had placed the machine of administration, he was about to leave the office, when the judge stopped him as he reached the doorway, by saying, in the tone of a man who has forgotten some insignificant matter:

"Ah! I forgot one circumstance — " The malicious judge made a pause. Raspail looked at him sideways, while the judge looked at nothing at all as he continued:

"Is it not true that because you belong to a secret society — more secret than the one of which you are president — you have been obliged to refuse the cross of the Legion of Honour? In doing so have you not obeyed an order of that secret society?"

"Monsieur," replied Raspail proudly, "I am not here to answer personal questions, even from an examining judge. I have signed the declaration you have legally obliged me to make. I may have compromised myself; I will not compromise others. I can be a martyr, but I will not be a traitor."

So saying he departed, but less proud of himself than he was a few moments earlier, for it is a fact that the heads of secret societies do not belong to them-

selves. In the name of independence they have less liberty than all other men. They are compelled to obey, outside of legal society, an inflexible command. They resemble those men who, having broken the bonds of marriage, become the slaves of jealous and imperious mistresses. The pressure that secret societies exert upon their leaders compelled to combat a now superannuated tyranny, almost excuses a return to reactionary measures.

If there had not been so many uprisings instigated by those societies (of all parties) during the reign of Louis-Philippe there would have been no *cabinet noir*, of which Raspail and so many others were the daily prey, and the police under that tolerant reign would not have been reënforced by so many adversaries of liberty.

In 1848, when the Tuileries was pillaged, a part of the secrets of the *cabinet noir* were revealed by a mass of letters: some from Republicans like Raspail, Ledru-Rollin, and Blanqui; others from Monarchists like Prince Talleyrand, who cheated and deceived Louis-Philippe whom he had *made*, just as he deceived all the other sovereigns with whom he dealt. The discovery of this correspondence proved that the government born of Liberty did not shrink from domiciliary visits, nor from corrupting men in various employs, in order to keep itself posted as to all the revolutionary manœuvres. The *cabinet* was suppressed in 1848; but its suppression was a good deal like that of the Bastille. It existed no longer in name under the Empire; but it existed in fact at the Tuileries, with numberless branches.

The discovery of Louis-Philippe's correspondences made the world cry out: "Corruption!" But afterwards — what came?

I was not yet twenty-five years old when I was intrusted, as I have said, with the functions of clerk of the court of the Seine. Later, in consequence of an overthrow of government, I was suddenly appointed to a place in a Ministry, which retarded, for a time, my legitimate advancement in my chosen career. I will presently relate the circumstances of that appointment, due to two statesmen who acted in my behalf, each with a different object, but both from self-interest.

Had it depended on me, at this period of my life, I should have been content to remain simply a clerk of the court [*greffier*]. I have had no other ambition than to follow the inclinations of my mind and faculties, using them for the good of my country, satisfying my tastes, and securing the safety of those who depended on me. A tenacious hunter of the most dangerous and crafty criminals of the city, my hounding instincts cease the moment my prey is in the hands of justice. I take as much pains to lessen the hardships of a scoundrel's captivity as I took to capture him.

When I began, as recording clerk in a criminal court, to collate, verify, and correct the reports of the secret police, that police had little in itself to recommend it. It still showed the hand of Vidocq; and his *moutons* [spies] who tracked the thieves were scarcely more honest than the game they hunted. Monsieur Allard was the first to crush the odious theory that to know

the ways and means of robbers the police must be half rascals themselves. Allard, a skilful administrator, reformed the staff of the agents of public safety. He justly thought that to inspire respect and terror in the enemies of society it was necessary to oppose absolute honesty to their vices, and irreproachable conduct to their debauchery. It was Allard who laid the foundation for a decent, scrupulous, and vigilant police administration, by clearing out, once for all, a band of smirched men, set to hunt for reprobates whom they resembled.

The numerous plots and attempted outbreaks that never ceased to trouble the reign of Louis-Philippe necessitated the creation of a double police — that of the Prefecture and that of the Château [the Tuileries]; the former becoming secondary to the latter. General Athalin, whose devotion to the family of the new King dated back for many years, was the supreme director of this upper police, which might, at that time, have been called the royal police. It was to him that the *cabinet noir* turned over the compromising letters and other revelations of the secret societies; to him that the Prefecture sent the reports and denunciations concerning political plots.

But if General Athalin found in the Minister of the Interior, Casimir Périer, and in the Prefecture eager assistants in frustrating conspirators aiming at the life of the King, he found a most discouraging opposition to his faithful efforts in the King himself. Here is an example of it: A military plot was hatching by the Bonaparte family to proclaim, on the 5th of May, 1831,

in the Place Vendôme, the return of Napoleon II. Ample information had reached General Athalin that Prince Louis Bonaparte and his mother, the Duchesse de Saint-Leu, were coming from Italy to proclaim the son of the Emperor in presence of the glorious relics of the Grand Army.

The plot was a serious one. The army, permeated by carbonaro sentiments, was undoubtedly awaiting the arrival of the Prince to make some alarming demonstration. The clever Duchess, in order to throw Louis-Philippe off his guard, asked an audience of His Majesty and permission to cross France, with her son, on their way from Italy to England. The good-natured King behaved as if he knew nothing of the Bonapartist proceedings. He welcomed the Duchess favourably, and even gave her some money, for which she asked, to enable her to continue her journey. On leaving the King, she said that her son would have come with her to the Tuileries, to express his thanks, if he had not been confined to his bed by illness.

The day after this friendly meeting of the new King and the ex-Queen of Holland, General Athalin, exasperated by the mildness and meekness of his sovereign-master, summoned a council of Ministers at the palace.

"What is the news, gentlemen?" said the King, as he took his seat.

"Very serious news, sire," replied the Minister of War; "I have positive information, which I cannot doubt, that the Duchesse de Saint-Leu and her son have passed through the south of France."

The King smiled.

" Sire," said Casimir Périer, Minister of the Interior, " I can complete the information of his excellency the Minister of War. Not only did Queen Hortense cross the south of France, but she is now in Paris, and Your Majesty received her yesterday."

The King, still smiling, replied :

" You are so well-informed, my dear Minister, that you leave me no time to tell you anything. The Duchesse de Saint-Leu came to see me, as you say, and presented the excuses of her son, who was confined to his bed by illness."

" As for that," said the Minister of the Interior in a grave tone, " Your Majesty need feel no anxiety. At the hour when Your Majesty received the mother, the son was in conference with the leaders of the Republican party to overthrow the monarchy in the name of Napoleon II. All is ready for the coming revolution if the Prince and his mother are not immediately arrested."

" Enough, gentlemen," said the King in a masterful tone of voice. " I have confidence in the good sense of the public. The plot cannot succeed. Enough has been said about the King of the French ; let us now talk of France."

The King, who obstinately refused to pay attention to the counsels of his Ministers or to the opinions of the police, was forced, on May 5, to surrender to evidence. The Place Vendôme echoed with the seditious shouts of the soldiers of the First Empire. Several charges of cavalry were required to break up the begin-

nings of a revolt which, without the precautions taken by the Minister of War and the Minister of the Interior, would have reached the proportions of a revolution. The King contented himself by simply withdrawing the permission he had given to Queen Hortense. Casimir Périer was forced to take upon himself the duty of sending her into exile.

At this period Prince Louis Bonaparte was already a dangerous conspirator; he did not leave France for England until two months after his mother. If the King had listened to Casimir Périer, he would have sent both mother and son to a distant prison for the rest of their days. Had he done so, he would have saved the July Monarchy from the Strasbourg and Boulogne attempts; and the escape from Ham would not, perhaps, have resulted, as its consequence, in the fall of the most pacific of kings.

Looking back, I see that, even then, the Bonapartist party was far stronger than any one at the time supposed. The municipal police was full of its partisans; and later, the Strasbourg and Boulogne affairs, and the imprisonment at Ham, gave the Prince a numerous fanatical following among the lesser bourgeoisie of Paris. Napoleonic liberalism was getting more and more grafted into the tree of Republicanism.

But this spirit, which pervaded all classes, started from the highest. I was able to know this, beyond a doubt, by the actions of an influential personage, a deputy from my department, who, together with M. Thiers, helped to strengthen and secure my modest situation.

This personage, whom I shall designate in these Memoirs by his initial only, M. de L——, was the descendant of a family whose authority and fortune had never ceased to favour, even under the Directory, the ambition of Napoleon I. Faithful to his traditions, M. de L—— continued, under the Bourbons and the government of Louis-Philippe, to be favourable to the Bonapartes. He it was who decided M. Thiers to become the partisan of Louis-Napoleon up to the eve of the *Coup d'État*, by keeping before his mind the admiration he had so brilliantly and publicly vowed to the hero of Brumaire. It was M. de L—— who, towards the close of Louis-Philippe's reign, detached the Duc de Morny from the July Monarchy, to make him, what he ultimately became, the strongest column of his adulterine brother's reign. I, myself, owe it to M. de L—— that I passed scatheless through the Napoleonic epoch, of which I was, in the courts, the sworn supporter. Thanks to M. de L—— I became, in my pursuit of thieves and murderers, a useful and trusted agent of a government whose principles I did not share.

I must now turn back for a moment and relate the singular circumstances under which, while still a mere copying clerk at the Palais de Justice, M. de L—— caused me to make the acquaintance of M. Thiers.

In July, 1830, while the fighting was still going on in Paris, M. de L—— took me with him to his country house at Montmorency. His nearest neighbour was one of the most ardent promoters of the revolution then in progress — namely, M. Thiers; who was wait-

ing, with eager impatience, till the smoke of the gunpowder cleared away from Paris, in order to reappear, during the last act, in a sort of apotheosis. At Montmorency, M. de L—— was offering prayers for the son of his emperor; M. Thiers, son of the Revolution, was offering prayers for himself only.

In Paris at this moment the populace were variously shouting here and there over the barricades: "*Vive la République!*" "*Vive Napoléon II!*" "*Vive Henri V!*" The revolution over, it profited nothing either to the Republic, or to Napoleon II, or to Henri V. Constitutional monarchy arose from the plebeian victory! —another trick of Prince Talleyrand, anxious to avenge himself on the Restoration, which had refused to recognize the services he had rendered to it under the Empire.

M. de L——, seizing the moment when M. Thiers was about to become one of the heroes of the time, hastened to present me to him. He told him that I was a young man very capable of helping him, both as secretary and as a man of action. The moment was well chosen by my protector, always solicitous about my future. M. Thiers was dying to know what was going on in Paris, especially in the liberal salons. I offered to go to Paris and bring an exact account of what was happening. He accepted my offer eagerly; and I, who was only twenty-three years old, plunged head foremost into the furnace which M. Thiers himself had lighted by his call to arms in his newspaper, the *National.*

On reaching Paris, I found that, while the fighting was still going on, the future courtiers of the coming victory were getting ready, at the hôtel Laffitte, in the rue de Valois, to organize a provisional government. On receiving this news, M. Thiers — who had been uncertain whether his little legs would have to run across the frontier or whether his head might go to Paris to be crowned king of the barricades — M. Thiers set off at once for the hôtel Laffitte. I accompanied him, as secretary; not, however, without being lectured by M. de L——. Pleased as he was to see fortune smile upon me, he counselled me not to trust too much in my new master.

"My friend," he said, "don't quit your present position to attach yourself exclusively to M. Thiers. That ambitious man gambles too heavily with fortune ever to make yours. Limping pupil of Talleyrand, he will always limp — like his master, who limps in all ways! This revolution, which Thiers has made with Talleyrand by cheating him, will cheat himself. Don't belong to him, because M. Thiers belongs to no one — unless the rising sun be somebody. As for me, I am for Napoleon II, because *I* belong, by tradition and conviction, to the Empire; but M. Thiers belongs only to himself!"

I was not long in appreciating this severe judgment on the character of the historian of the "Consulate and the Empire."

At the hôtel Laffitte, where M. Thiers found himself regarded only as an historian and a journalist, he was accepted by Talleyrand solely as a writer writing under

dictation — the dictation of the leaders of the army, of the magistracy, of the bourgeoisie; and he did actually draw up, without a draft, an Orleanist proclamation. M. Thiers, who, three days earlier, had caused a crown to fall at St. Cloud, was compelled, under the orders of Talleyrand, to pick it up and carry it from the hôtel Laffitte to the Palais-Royal!

I remained at the hôtel Laffitte, as the improvised secretary of the provisional government, so long as that government lasted. After the Orleanist proclamation it dissolved; but not until it had instituted a lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom. From that day I saw no more of M. Thiers. He who had expected to be the responsible sovereign of a new Republican government, had gone to the Palais-Royal to salute the rising sun — the coming King, Louis-Philippe.

My duties, as improvised secretary of the provisional government, had kept me in a little office opening into the antechamber of the large council-room. Every morning I received the persons who solicited the favour of being allowed to speak with the members of the council, and I wrote down their statements, true or false, of their services to the national "cause." On my declaration, signed by the petitioner, the new sovereigns of the government, issuing from the barricades, accepted or rejected the request of the aspiring courtier. In the one week that I passed in that little office, I saw defile before me all the celebrated men of the day; and I must say they seemed to me very small. They humbled themselves before me because, by a

stroke of my pen, I could open to them the door of the temple of fortune, of which I was, in truth, the mere usher. I soon wearied of this function, in which I continued only just long enough to satisfy my curiosity to see and know such men as d'Argoult, Odilon Barrot, Dupin, Guizot, Casimir Delavigne, etc., etc.; all those men of the past, diplomats, financiers, artists, and writers, whom the political storm had thrown down, and who were all striving now to hook on to the new ladder raised by a temporizing power.

It was during my fleeting function as clerk and usher to the provisional government that I met a personage who afterwards made himself a name in artistic and literary philanthropy — Baron Taylor. Certainly I little expected to see in the antechamber of the hôtel Laffitte the former aide-de-camp of the Duc d'Angoulême, the equerry of the staff of the Trocadero, saluting the sun of July and the return of the "three colours."

At this period of his life Baron Taylor (whose title of nobility was a personal reward conferred upon him by the fallen monarch) was already in middle life. Tall, with a vigorous frame, he had the slightly theatrical movements which characterize a diplomat, a soldier, or an artist. Abundant hair surrounded his lively, expressive face, lighted by brilliant eyes; his large jaws and dilated nostrils expressed, as fully as did his piercing glance, unquenchable vivacity and great shrewdness, joined to intense ambition. Though he was very vigorous, his limbs had the ingratiating suppleness that

marks the courtier by profession. He was obsequious, and yet he had a lofty air which inspired involuntary respect. When he gave me his name I bowed; but the baron bowed lower than his humble servant. A practised courtier, he knew by experience that there are no little subalterns for him who seeks to flatter fortune.

When I excused myself for asking the object of his visit, explaining that my duty required me to transmit his wishes to the council in writing, he gracefully acquiesced and dictated to me the following words:

"Former aide-de-camp to the Duc d'Angoulême; designer to His Highness; on a mission into Egypt when King Charles X fell under the stroke of the national demand; Baron Taylor has returned from the East, guided by patriotism. While preserving a platonic gratitude to the fallen monarchy, he feels it his duty, at a moment when France has so much need of money, to return and lay upon the altar of the country the sum that remains to him — namely, one hundred thousand francs — of the five hundred thousand which he had received for his artistic and scientific explorations along the banks of the Nile."

Full of admiration for a man who forgot his political principles and affections to think only of his country and his duty as a citizen, I hastened to obtain for him the audience he desired. Eight days later the generous baron received an acknowledgment of his devotion in being appointed director of the Théâtre-Français.

Alas! every medal has its reverse. The then famous actor Samson, Baron Taylor's friend and schoolmate,

had followed the latter's example in passing promptly from the Bourbon camp to that of the Orleans. Now Samson, the great comedian, nurtured in the school of Molière, had, like Mlle. Mars, a horror of the romanticists. He saw, with repugnance, that under the new régime the romantic school might invade the temple sacred to classic art. When, on the accession of the popular king, it was a question of rewarding the baron's devotion, Samson and Mlle. Mars took counsel together, and petitioned the new government to make Baron Taylor, on whose classicism they relied, their future director. But Taylor, always diplomatic and ever turning to the side from which blew the wind, opened wide the sacred doors to the apostles of romanticism — to Victor Hugo and to Alexandre Dumas *père!*

Then, indeed, the new director of the Théâtre-Français had to bear the savage reproaches of his friend Samson, who reminded him under what conditions he and Mlle. Mars had petitioned for his appointment.

"My friend," said the baron (who at the Théâtre-Français was a good deal like King Solomon between the two mothers), "my friend, I love Molière dearly, but I don't detest Shakespeare."

However, the recriminations of Samson and Mlle. Mars, the two oldest comedians of the company, became so bitter against him that he resigned the directorship, remarking quietly:

"When it rains, I put up my umbrella."

This quarrel between the great comedian and the baron was only a passing affair, after all. It did not

prevent Samson, a man of true devotion, from assisting his old friend to found the latter's first philanthropic society, called the "Artists' Association." In all, Baron Taylor founded five artistic associations in Paris. Humanity should be as grateful to him as it is to Saint-Vincent de Paul, or to Mirabeau, the friend of man.

As for me, as soon as order was restored, and my curiosity was satisfied, I made haste to leave the hôtel Laffitte, and resume my functions of clerk at the Palais de Justice. I quitted the society of politicians for that of criminals, who share with the former the vices of humanity, and do not boast of possessing all its virtues.

CHAPTER III

HOW I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH MY FUTURE MASTER

A YEAR had not elapsed since I had resumed my functions as clerk at the Palais de Justice before an adventure befel me, which came near ending in a bloody drama. It led to my knowing, in the rue aux Fèves, the most disreputable quarter of Paris, a young man who, eighteen years later, stepped into the place of a sovereign for whose fall he had plotted and worked for that length of time. The affair, improbable as it may seem, is none the less true.

One day, on the open square of the Palais de Justice, which was then used as a place where criminals found guilty in the assize courts were pilloried, I noticed a young girl about seventeen years of age standing close to the scaffold on which three men, condemned to the galleys, were exposed to the public gaze. The face of one of them struck me as familiar, but I could not at the moment place him.

The girl was extremely pretty. Though her clothes were sordid, her air and manners were those of a *soubrette* of the old régime; and they formed a curious contrast to the hangdog look of the felons at whom

she was gazing. Suddenly she approached me, but without coquetry, and asked me to go and see her that same evening in the rue aux Fèves, giving me the number of the house. Then she ran away like a fawn; but, as she did so, I noticed that she exchanged a look with one of the men bound on the scaffold; and I also noticed that the smile she gave him had a certain cruel and malignant gaiety.

As soon as I entered the Palais, I lost no time in convincing myself that the house in the rue aux Féves, which the girl had named to me, was precisely the most dangerous and suspected house in the city. It was, in fact, the famous *Cabaret du Lapin Blanc*, afterwards made celebrated by Eugène Sue, who undoubtedly knew the circumstances I am about to relate.

In those days the quarter called specially the Cité, was the rendezvous of all the evil-doers of Paris. By that fatality which seems to push unhappy souls tempted to suicide to the brink of an abyss, so do villains, thieves, and murderers congregate in the Cité, close to the very walls of the Palais de Justice. In vain do the towers of the Palais overlook, like an eternal threat, this labyrinth of streets where criminals of all kinds lurk after nightfall. It was in these damp and noisome regions, where fetid alleys led to filthy stairways, that a mass of outlaws, human vermin, swarmed; here the most monstrous crimes were planned, the heroes of which were soon arraigned in the courts before they departed to the galleys, or died upon the scaffold.

I remembered that the wine-shop of the *Lapin Blanc*

was the most iniquitous lair in the Cité. Six months earlier a crime had been committed there; a man had been murdered in its cellars, and one of the three men pilloried that morning, an old *fagot* (to use a term of the galleys), was one of the murderers. The singular look the young girl had cast at the man after appointing me to meet her at that very *Lapin Blanc*, came into my mind, and I shuddered. Some months earlier I had gone to that wine-shop, with the examining judge of my section, to make a report on the frequenters of that cut-throat den, in consequence of a mysterious murder which had there been committed, but for which the guilty man could not be convicted for want of actual proof.

I own that these recollections, coming to me on the discovery that the address given me was that of this villainous lair, warned me of danger. But I was young and very ardent in my work, and without further reflection I went, at ten o'clock that evening, to the police station in the rue de Jérusalem. There I told the officer in charge that I was going to the *Lapin Blanc*, to study the locality; and I asked him to put a certain number of policemen at my disposal, who, the moment I blew my whistle, were to make a general raid upon the wine-shop.

Secure in these precautions, and armed with my whistle, I made my way to the rue aux Fèves. It was a singular street, forming a horseshoe in the centre of the Cité. The upper floors of its dilapidated buildings, supported on mouldy pillars, overhung the shops on

the ground floor. The iron-barred windows that did not belong to the wine-shops, to the houses of prostitutes, and receivers of stolen goods, were never lighted at night; so much did their inhabitants dread the population around them.

The *Lapin Blanc* was at the centre of the rue aux Fèves. It was the tavern of the past-masters of theft and crime. A large, low room, its ceiling striped with black and smoky rafters, held six tables, fastened to the whitewashed walls. The tables formed in line before a counter, or bar, covered with zinc and bristling with jugs bound with iron. These jugs were chained to the counter; the tables and benches were chained to the walls.

The room opened upon an alley, through a door lighted by a cracked lantern, on which was printed, in red letters, "Night lodgings here." At this period, when a thief had "made a stroke," when his pocket "snored," all his particular band rendezvoused at the *Lapin Blanc*, to eat and drink and make merry on the proceeds of the "swag." If, in the interval, he was "nabbed," never did the band "peach" upon him. In vain had the police tried to make the master of the establishment open his lips; never had they got even a stray word from him. He was, in fact, a free mason of the *haute pègre* [the upper class of experienced thieves; they never commit small thefts, and call those who do so, *pégriots*]. When the police endeavoured to make him talk, "he rowed a boat"; which means, in their parlance, he led them from lie to lie.

I had proof of this in the case I have mentioned — a murder in the cellars of the *Lapin Blanc*. The police had captured the murderer, but they could not find the body of the murdered man. I went the next day, with the commissary of police and the examining judge, all through these cellars, which were really a long subterranean passage leading down to the city sewers. I now remembered having stated in my *procès-verbal* that I thought a body might be lost in these cellars by being forced into the sewer and carried to the Seine.

When, on the evening I am now relating, I entered the room of the *Lapin Blanc*, I saw, standing at the counter, a man wearing an otter-skin cap, the visor of which concealed his face. He stood erect, with his hands resting on a jug. His attitude looked to me suspicious.

I advanced without shutting the door behind me. At a table on the right were two fellows playing cards. They seemed absorbed in the game, but I noticed that under the table they held two long knives. Did they doubt each other? Were they both prepared to draw the blood of the first who cheated to the other's injury?

At this moment the girl I had seen in the morning came from the end of the room and placed herself at the counter beside the man with the cap. Pointing her finger at me, she screamed out:

"There 's the villain I lured this morning at the scaffold. Father," she added, her mouth quivering, her eyes sparkling, "we must wash his linen in the

bloody ——. Quick, you fellows, and as soon as he is chilled take him to the cellar he knows so well!"

I had scarcely time to spring to the door, which I had left half open, before the two men at cards had seized their knives and were bounding towards me. I felt for my whistle to call the police, who were waiting at each crossing of the rue aux Fèves.

Horrors! I could not find it — it was gone — I was lost!

I felt the steel of one of the murderers, while the other seized me round the body and caught my hands to deliver me helpless to the assassin. In vain I struggled against his muscular strength. His arms were iron. An instant more, and the knife of his companion would have cut my throat, when the noise of many steps echoed in the alley.

Terrified at the imminence of the danger, I had closed my eyes that I might not see the gestures of the father and the fury who were commanding my executioners. I thought I was dead, when a cluster of men came around me, and I heard a well-known voice say over my shoulder:

"Enough, enough, Nina-Fleurette! enough of this nonsense! Let my friend Claude alone! If you carry the thing too far, to teach him not to be inquisitive, I, and others, will punish you."

As if by enchantment the arms of the murderers fell from me, and the furious gestures of the master of the place and his daughter threatened me no longer. I was free! But — inconceivable sight! — I saw before

me, whom? M. de L——, my protector, whose presence at the *Lapin Blanc* was as inexplicable as the sudden change in my favour produced by him. He wore the short linen blouse of a workman, as did a young man who accompanied him; the rest of their clothes were shabby. The young man appeared to be, like himself, a man of society in disguise.

The singular face of the latter struck me. Though somewhat disagreeable, the expression of the eyes was extraordinarily gentle; their sparkling pupils seemed bathed in a magnetic fluid that fascinated all they gazed upon. I noticed that Nina-Fleurette had turned pale; then, shaking herself, she was transformed from a fury into a smiling bacchante under the glance of the young man, which never for a moment left her.

In spite of the danger I had just escaped, the presence of this personage in that cut-throat place, as inexplicable as that of M. de L——, perplexed me. I myself could not escape the fascination of that young man whose impassible face, with its almost grotesque features, exercised through its eyes so extraordinary a power. This man, — I divined him at a first glance, — placed on the lowest rung of the social ladder, might be the most dangerous of villains; on the highest, he might become the envied rival of the great. He was born to subdue, or to perish. Short-legged, with a long waist, he was framed like those great birds which are all body supported by webbed feet. He waddled as he walked, like a vulture. There was a mixture in this young man of the crafty bandit and the gentleman bandit. His coun-

tenance, almost burlesque, yet attractive, was not out of keeping with the corrupt faces around him, which it mastered while harmonizing with them.

While I was examining this curious companion of M. de L——, the cortège of scoundrels who had entered with them took their places at the tables. Nina-Fleurette, indifferent now to vengeance, flung herself on the neck of the young man, who left M. de L—— to embrace her. As for me, I was forgotten. All my instincts as a policeman were aroused, and I had even lost consciousness, in presence of this inexplicable scene, of the horrible danger I had just escaped. But I was not left long under the impressions of the strange scene before me. M. de L—— came to my side, and said, in a low voice:

"Go away now, and come to me to-morrow morning in my little house at Passy. You shall then know how I had the luck to save you; and you shall also know about that young man who accompanies me."

I went away, but before I went I discovered that not only my whistle, but my watch and my purse had disappeared! As I reached one of the ends of the rue aux Fèves I saw the three-cornered hats of the policemen who were still awaiting my signal. In the interests of M. de L——, I passed on without speaking to them.

The next morning I was punctual to my appointment at Passy. I had hardly entered the room when M. de L—— came to me with a furious air, exclaiming:

"Ha! a pretty business you did yesterday! After incurring the vengeance of the Prince's mistress, Nina,

you must needs have the Prince arrested at the corner of the rue aux Fèves, and he is now in Sainte-Pélagie! If I, too, am not in prison, it is no thanks to you; I escaped your hounds because your Prefect is afraid of me."

I was confounded. I suppose I stood with my mouth open and my eyes staring, for M. de L——'s wrath suddenly changed into loud hilarity.

"True, true," he said, "of course you know nothing about it; you are only a clerk; but your office must have known all about it. Well, let me tell you that the young man whom I accompanied last night is Prince Louis Bonaparte, son of Queen Hortense, on a mission to the dangerous classes of the Cité. The King thinks him ill in bed; or did think so some time ago, when the Prince summoned all the old remnants of the Grand Army to the Place Vendôme."

At the name of Prince Louis I uttered an exclamation of surprise, and I asked by what combination of circumstances they had managed to save my life by exercising power over men so outside of their social condition.

"A prince," replied M. de L——, "ought to know everything and everybody. You are aware that, after Napoleon II, Prince Louis is the one whom *our* Emperor appointed to succeed him. Now Prince Louis is deeply interested in the question of pauperism, and he studies it among the most abject classes before he is called upon to solve it. That is why you saw him at the *Lapin Blanc*. It is there that he bestows his alms

on the disinherited; whom a selfish society sends to the galleys, but whom the Napoleons, once in power, will reinstate, by less barbarous laws, in that society of which they are now the pariahs."

I did not venture to reply to M. de L——, though I had a mind to say that Prince Louis's charity, given, in the interests of his dynasty, to galley-slaves, was likewise bestowed on pretty girls, who were also criminals. But I held my tongue, lest I should irritate my friend and protector.

Nevertheless, I did say (by way of excusing myself) that if the Prince had been arrested by my policemen it was not so much because of his philanthropy, but because he was conspiring against the government, and I added that, so far as I was concerned, my department was not responsible for conspirators.

"You are right, my friend," replied M. de L——, now quite softened; "after all, though the Prince is in prison, he has nothing to fear. They will let him out, without a flourish of trumpets, in spite of Casimir Périer, who is always against us. On our side we have your Prefect and General Lafayette. If the King dares to keep the Prince in prison, we shall act on Lafayette. If that timid individual, who, out of love for popularity, plumes himself on being the 'soldier of Liberty,' goes back on us, we shall compromise him — we have the means. Now, my dear Claude, I warn you, whenever you find a Napoleonist, male or female, in your path, shut your eyes, and don't open them on any but your thieves. Remember that a Napoleonist saved you

from the vengeance of men who had sworn your death. *Au revoir.*"

I left him, convinced that the Bonapartist party was far more powerful than was generally supposed, inasmuch as it had ramifications from the very lowest classes of society to the most respected and respectable man in France, General Lafayette. I myself was a living example of the mysterious authority exercised in the dark by that party.

At this period, that is to say, a few days after May 5, 1831, and the revolt in the Place Vendôme, Prince Louis made his first appearance in prison at the same time as Raspail [physiologist, chemist, and revolutionist, president of the *Société des Amis du Peuple*]. I transcribe a passage from one of Raspail's letters, written from Sainte-Pélagie, in which he describes his prison companion Prince Louis:

"The Prince is not yet a general; he is two grades short of it, but he has something better; he has in his veins a few drops of the blood of Napoleon the Great. The authenticity of his origin is in his make. Napoleon had not a nail more to his boots than this young man. He wears the amulet of the great captain and his gray overcoat, adopted in 1804 and worn till 1814. He edits a republican newspaper, the name of which conflicts with imperial pretensions — 'The Revolution.' Do the funds for this newspaper come from the Napoleons? or from the Prefecture of Police? The last hypothesis is admissible, though singular; for the management of that newspaper, 'The Revolution,' is a stepping-stone by

which to attain the honours of the police. Issuing from its offices, the bookkeeper may become officer of the peace, head of the section, commissary of police, inspector of the markets, etc. As for the furnisher of the funds, *his* profit is in the situations he obtains for others; while the debtor, in his quality as prince, lives — *en prince* — in a separate pavilion that communicates with the palace court.

"The illustrious prisoner now with us grants audiences; the jailers are his chamberlains. In the evening, after dark, the air resounds with military music, made by his partisans, who give him a serenade. When he deigns to take a walk in the courtyard his staff, which followed him into captivity, falls into line at his approach, in the attitude of soldiers without arms, saluting with their hands at their shakos.

"The examination of his case will not take place as yet; a Pretender is not treated like the small fry, of which I am one."

Raspail was mistaken in one statement: the criminal examination into the Bonapartist conspiracy was stopped before it began. They discovered, as M. de L—— had given me to understand, the relations of General Lafayette with the son of Queen Hortense. The General was, in fact, compromised by letting his support be *expected* by this conspiracy, plotted in the interest of Napoleon II. They also discovered that Prince Louis and his mother, on their way from Italy through France, had everywhere sown a leaven of discord which the Carbonari were stirring up. They found that at Lyons,

Grenoble, and Lille, revolts were to break out simultaneously with one in Paris; that the garrisons were partly won over; and that a certain number of the members of both Chambers were prepared to put themselves under Lafayette, to form, *provisionally*, the nucleus of a national Napoleonic Chamber.

Had it not been for the energy of Casimir Périer, who, in spite of Louis-Philippe, cut the evil at its roots; and had it not been for the mere chance that placed policemen on the track of that Wandering Jew of plots, this Napoleonic outbreak would have had another conclusion than that of the 5th of May.

But Louis-Philippe, worthy man, could not endure that any suspicion should arise that he was not the "Citizen-King," the sovereign chosen by the popular voice. He hastened, therefore, to smother the whole affair. He opened, without a sound, the gates of Sainte-Pélagie, and Prince Louis joined his mother in London to renew his plots.

This adventure of the Prince in the Cité was known to others besides myself. The lair of the *Lapin-Blanc*, the scene of that adventure, must also have been known to Eugène Sue, whose father, formerly surgeon-physician of Napoleon I, had retained, like M. de L——, very close relations with the Bonaparte family. For my part, I have always felt convinced that Prince Louis was the original of Prince Rodolphe, the hero of the *Mystères de Paris*.

CHAPTER IV

THE END OF A REIGN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

I REMAINED for eighteen years at the Palais de Justice, as clerk of the criminal courts of the Seine. I owed this long period in one grade as much to my lack of ambition as to the zeal which I put into a function more useful than brilliant. A good clerk is a very precious assistant for a judge. The *procès-verbal* [written minutes of all the facts and proceedings of a case] which he draws up of the statements of the accused, of the testimony (more or less conclusive) of the commissaries of police, is the fundamental basis of a magistrate's judgement. Often they have done me the justice to say that my *procès verbaux*, without partiality, without acrimony, were elucidated with a clearness that lessened the delicate and difficult labour of the judge.

It was to this slender merit, developed by long experience, that I owed the distinction of being almost the dean of the clerks of the Palais de Justice. It was not until 1848, shortly before the revolution that led to the fall of Louis-Philippe, that I succeeded in becoming a commissary of police. After that time I was

commissary at Méaux, commissary at Passy, commissary at Batignolles, and commissary at Ménilmontant, attached to the section of the theatres; after that I was commissary at the markets; then commissary of the judiciary delegations, before becoming, under the Empire, chief of police [*chef de la police de sûreté générale*] in that very Palais de Justice from which I had issued a simple clerk. Of this last situation I had an unusually long lease, because France, under the Empire, had eighteen years of respite; and during those years all functionaries could live under the laws without burdening the employés of a régime that was, nevertheless, autocratic. It is, above all, in my post as chief of the secret police (which began in June, 1859) that I shall be able to show myself in my true light — a Gil Blas, with a good-natured turn of mind and a benevolent countenance, a man of indefatigable action under a paternal aspect.

It is true that by nature I possess a bodily slowness, which may perhaps deceive even the most perspicacious persons. On the other hand, I have a *flair*, which, in spite of my temperament, excites my energy and has rarely deceived me in my *hunts for men.* A thief or a murderer, whom the Prefecture points out to me, becomes a prey of which I sometimes instantly divine the trail; the faintest indication of his passage endows me often with a species of "second-sight." I do not wish to make a parade of my merits; but if, from the faintest indication, the most insignificant fact, I have often established a whole world of proofs and revela-

tions, I owe such merits to a natural gift, a wholly special organization. I was born a policeman as a greyhound is born to course. I can no more explain what put me on the trail of Tropmann than we can explain the *flair* of the hounds for a wild animal. Once at work, I did not possess myself or my object; my object possessed me. It was not till my work was accomplished, no matter what period of time it took, that I felt fatigue and exhaustion. Once back in ordinary life my ardour was at an end; I forgot it; I became once more a rather benignant being, whose only desire was to rest and talk of other things than the cares of his profession.

As clerk of the court, I wrote down very many of the *causes célèbres* of Louis-Philippe's time, which I shall not quote here because I was, after all, only their stenographer. Looking back, I see plainly that the beginning and the end of the reign of the Citizen-King resembled in many of its facts the beginning and the end of the reign of Napoleon III. Revolts signalized the first years of the *juste milieu;* a great crime assisted in bringing about its end — a clap of thunder, a stroke of lightning overturned two thrones. The crime of the Duc de Choiseul-Praslin was a warning of the fall of Louis-Philippe; and the crime of Tropmann was equally a warning of the fall of Napoleon III.

When the revolution of 1848 broke out, many of the men then raised to power I had known in the criminal courts when taking their depositions, and making out their *procès verbaux.* In spite of my aversion to politics

my career was very nearly ruined in 1848 by the rancour of the Republicans, who could not forgive me for having done my duty under the monarchy they had just overthrown. If I renewed, not very long after, my career at the point where, as I shall presently show, I was forced to leave it in 1848, I owe it to my constant protector, M. de L——, who rose to a pinnacle of power as soon as the Napoleonic aurora dawned for his prince.

Yet that which made my fortune shortly after 1848 nearly cost me my life when I became, under the Commune, a prisoner in the hands of the enemies of the Empire. At the beginning of the latter reign I was taxed with Orléanism, and under the Commune I came near being shot because I was tainted with Bonapartism!

From Paris to Japan, from Japan to Rome, the most idiotic situation for a French citizen is that of being a public functionary. Though our administration is one of the fine triumphs that Europe envies, it does not guarantee to protect the future of the greatest or the humblest of its representatives. I had hardly been two months commissary of police at Passy when the revolution of 1848 broke out. I, who had accepted this post and this retreat in what was then a tranquil village, hoping that after nearly twenty years of toil in the criminal courts I might win my last spurs as a civil officer, was brutally forced from my position. Because I belonged to the administrative hierarchy of a government, the adversaries of which had no conception that

its end was so near, my career was destroyed! I was cast out by a society I had loyally served in the duties it had placed upon me, solely because a fatal hour had struck for its monarch. I was condemned because Providence had stamped with reprobation a crowned family which up to that hour had considered itself under divine protection.

Yet it was easy to foresee in 1847 that a terrible moment was approaching for the omnipotent bourgeois class. If I had not lived in a world of criminals, which prevented me from watching the abnormal movements of society under Louis-Philippe, I should have foreseen the social convulsion that now swept me off my feet.

Since the death of his sister, the Princess Adelaide, the King, deprived of his Egeria, was but the shadow of himself. The terrible warning given to him by the death of his eldest son was renewed and deepened by the death of his lifelong adviser and support. Isolated on his throne, surrounded by ambitious men whose interest it was to make it totter, Louis-Philippe felt the danger that came from "the street" and the "faubourgs," without finding in the aristocratic and financial salons (who were secretly conspiring with "the street") the safety he implored.

France had reached the crucial movement that parties seem regularly to produce every eighteen years, a period when all appears to waver, to undergo a mysterious change in the physical as well as in the moral order; when the seasons themselves bring misery to

the poor — that weapon which ambitious men, seeking social upheaval, are so quick to use.

Misery below, corruption above, the shameful crime of the deputy Martin, the frightful crime of the Duc de Choiseul-Praslin, crime everywhere, even upon the steps of the throne, warned the reign of Louis-Philippe in 1847 that it was approaching a catastrophe. Thrones and crowns are ever shattered by the same thunderbolts; they disappear in the same convulsions that gave birth to them. The scandals that marked the end of Louis-Philippe's reign were, like the murder of Victor Noir and the slaughters of Tropmann, the same thunder-claps that gave warning of the destruction of the Empire.

It is within the bosom of balancing powers that discords are produced which excite the defeated to obtain triumphs that may, at the time, avenge public opinion, but do not secure and strengthen society. The crime of the Duc de Praslin is an example of this. Its consequences, while giving to the country an apparent proof of the respect of the government for the great principle of equality which gave it birth and on which it rested, led, nevertheless, to the overthrow of that government.

This abominable crime proved that disregard of duty at the summit of society results in destroying the force and the prestige of the grandeur of that society,— although it must be said that it brought into high relief the sublime virtues of the illustrious victim, the daughter of Maréchal Sebastiani, the Duchesse

de Choiseul-Praslin, wife of the chamberlain of the Duchesse d'Orléans.

I was still a clerk at the Prefecture when the murder of the duchess shed horror throughout Paris, mourning into the King's palace, and roused implacable hatreds that were slumbering in the mind of parties. A peer of France the murderer of his wife! What a piece of luck for the Opposition! and for the journalists of the *Réforme*, the *Corsaire*, and the *National*. The avengers of the massacres of the rue Transnonain and of Lyons could never have hoped for such a scandal to unite with their political animosities the partisans of the Republic, the sore-heads at Ghent, and all the other malcontents, who, for eighteen years, had been paying with their liberty in Sainte-Pélagie for the right of protesting against an order of things that was neither legitimate monarchy nor republicanism!

The crime itself, which dishonoured the peerage, was horrible. When we were summoned, on the morning of August 18, 1847, to the hôtel Sebastiani in the faubourg Saint-Honoré, for a first inquest on the mutilated body of the Duchesse de Praslin, the commissaries of police, aided by physicians, had no difficulty in proving that a long and bloody struggle had taken place between the Duke and his unhappy wife. Like the vulgarest of common murderers, he had entered his wife's room to kill her while she was asleep. She must have sprung from her bed, for she was stabbed by a dagger about the head, on the wrists, and in the back. The fingers of her hands were cut through

in her helpless efforts to ward off the murderer's weapon.

The disorder of the room, and furniture stained with blood, left no doubt whatever as to the frightful struggle that must have taken place between the hapless victim and her murderer, who was placed under surveillance until proper steps could be taken for the arrest of a peer of France.

But what inflamed public opinion still further took place three days later, when the Duke, issuing from one of the first families of France, the murderer of his wife from infatuation for a governess, was enabled by royal condescension to escape the doom that awaited him. Those who had expected to see him die upon the scaffold were outraged when the Duke, judged by his peers (another grievance to the enemies of the throne), was brought in a dying condition before their bar. At the moment when the presiding peer urged the guilty man to make a full confession he fell unconscious. The physicians declared that he was poisoned, and he died that evening in prison.

The chemical analysis of Orfila showed the presence of arsenic in the Duke's body. But the conclusions of that great chemist (as shown in the case of Mme. Lafarge) were rather elastic. It was certainly strange that the Duke's death was speedy, while that of M. Lafarge was slow from the same poison. Raspail, the political and scientific enemy of Orfila, did not fail to call attention to this inconsistency of the noted chemist.

In vain did the Chamber of Peers say in its report (drawn up in secret session) that the Duc de Praslin had judged and condemned himself; the newspapers did not hesitate to say that it was not thus such a villain should have ended; and that if the examination begun by the ordinary judges had not been purposely transferred to the Court of Peers, the murderer would not have escaped legal justice. Some papers went much farther, and asserted that the Duc de Praslin was not dead, but had been sent to England by the authorities. Long afterwards, persons declared that they had seen him in England and in Switzerland. The rumour was current from the day of his trial, and a large force of police was required to keep back the crowd around the hearse, who threatened to break open the coffin, which the populace declared contained no body.

This ferment of the Parisian population gave warning that a crisis was approaching. From that day the *Société des Droits de l'Homme* [of the Rights of Man] re-formed its sections. They enveloped Paris in a secret net. Clément Thomas, a former sub-officer of the cuirassiers, was appointed to drill their troops, the citizens Baune, Charassin, Jules Favre, Charles Lagrange, shared with Clément Thomas the management of these sections of the "Rights of Man." The *National*, edited by Armand Marrast, the *Réforme*, edited by Ledru-Rollin, never ceased, under orders from the secret revolutionary committees, to wave, like a threat, the bloody robe of the victim of a peer of France. They printed her letters to the Duke (produced at the brief

trial) in a cheap pamphlet, which was sold about the streets for a few *sous*.

When M. Thiers, jealous of M. Guizot, when Lamartine, with his "Girondins," *caused* the revolt which was provoked by the banquets in honour of electoral reform, it was Armand Marrast, Ledru-Rollin, and their former soldiers of 1830, who turned that revolt into a revolution — which amazed and dumbfounded the very men who had prepared it, namely: Thiers and Odilon Barrot.

The *bourgeoisie*, as much fooled as their ambitious leaders, looked about them for a haven into which they might escape from a turbulent and bloody sea. Then it was that Prince Louis Bonaparte came from London to support the men in power, whom he presently fooled in their turn, as they had fooled Thiers and Odilon Barrot, Lamartine and Cavaignac! Perjury and baited traps gave France a short period of repose. But she paid dearly for it.

These reflections would be presumptuous from the pen of a simple police officer if I had not been called upon by my official duty to follow the actions of the secret societies, whose reports and bulletins came daily to the Prefecture of Police, thanks to its secret agent, the too-celebrated Lucien de La Hode. *Until*, and *through*, the year 1848, the press of the "Rights of Man," which printed those reports and bulletins, delivered them secretly to the police, by the hands of its "secretary," Lucien de La Hode, before sending them to its adherents!

From its outset, the Republic considered my past services a crime, because (as I may show later) the magistracy had caused me to strike, under Louis-Philippe, guilty men, who, under the new Republic, became heroes. Yet it was to the revolution of February that I owe a new existence which I did not solicit, and a doubtful celebrity which I never sought. Had it not been for that revolution which turned me out of my post as commissary, I should not have been the vigilant sleuth-hound of the greatest criminals of the Second Empire; I should never have mingled in its dramas; of the mysteries of which the assize courts allowed but a small portion to transpire.

Two days after the proclamation of the Republic, February 27, 1848, the citizen D—— entered my office. In the name of the Republic and of the new Prefect of police, he presented me with an order from the "citizen Caussidière," the Prefect, to give up my post within twenty-four hours to the bearer of the order. The order was formal and regular, and it was countersigned by a member of the new government. I bowed before its decree. My successor instantly planted himself in my office without allowing me to remove my belongings, because, he said, the furniture was the property of the Administration. Before leaving, well-nigh as naked as a little Saint-John, I asked my successor to employ my secretary, whose plight, poor fellow, was even worse than mine.

"No," replied the savage D——, "we mean to make a clean sweep; we want nothing left of the tyrant."

" Except the furniture," I remarked as I departed.

Thus I was cast out of an administration I had loyally served solely because the head of the government had fallen. There are moments in life, for individuals as well as for societies, when all is decadence and ruin; when the safest precautions of human wisdom give way beneath us like the foundations of a house. It was at the moment when, after nearly twenty years of faithful work, I hoped and expected to end my career honourably at Passy, that this cataclysm, to which I was a total stranger, befel me. When I found myself thus brutally cast out, as it were, upon the pavement, I felt as bewildered as I was despairing. I had a family. On the morrow my family would be without a home and without bread.

My situation was desperate; to whom could I turn? where could I go? M. Delessert, my Prefect, was either in hiding or had fled; to appeal to his successor, citizen Caussidière, was putting myself into the jaws of the wolf. After mature deliberation, a thought came to me, which ought to have come and would have come to me at once if I had not been so confused by the way in which citizen D—— had driven me from my office and seized my place and my furniture. I went to my protector, M. de L——.

I found him as gay and exultant as I was sad and sorrowful.

" At last!" he cried, flinging himself into my arms; " at last, my dear Claude, we have done with that reign of corruption. Louis-Philippe is down for ever, with

his Guizot — a hermaphrodite royalist, like all those Orléans! Well, it is over! *This* time it did not take long to do, for the tree was rotten — rotten to the core!"

I looked at M. de L—— in consternation; and I could not help saying to him, like Cæsar, —

"What! *you*, too?"

Then, looking at him a little closer, I saw that his clothes were sordid, and that he, so dainty in his habits, had a dirty face, and hands still dirtier.

"How? what?" I asked, "do you belong to the revolution? are you conspiring?"

"Why, of course," he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders; "and if you never guessed it when I roamed the streets of Paris in quest of adventures, it is because I pulled the wool over your eyes."

"Ah!" I exclaimed reproachfully; "you exposed me cruelly."

"Not at all, my dear Claude," he answered joyously; "don't you remember that I told you a few months ago that the government could n't last six months? As I said it I was thinking of a place for you, in the future, far better than the one you had under a bastard government, as stingy of favours as it was lavish of promises."

"Well, then," I said, promptly, "call up that future now."

"Oh!" he said, laughing, "you are in too great a hurry. Let us get rid of the Republic first, just as we have now got rid of the monarchy."

"Hunger cannot wait," I said hastily.

M. de L—— became serious, and asked me to explain my words.

I related the way in which I had been turned out of my office at Passy by citizen D——.

"Bravo!" he cried, clapping his hands. "Bravo! those Republicans are piling up a morrow of terrible hatreds. Bravo!" he exclaimed again, "you, commissary, dismissed by the Republic, in future you are one of us! You know very well that France, which has just pulled down a king, will never set him up again; hence the Prince must reign; he will be carried to the throne on the bucklers of the malcontents. You are one of us, I tell you, for you have the past and the present against you. You have no longer any choice. You belong to us — that is to say, you belong to the Prince, who, from this day forth becomes the safety, the fortune, the future of France!"

"No," I objected, "I belong to the fallen monarchy from duty and from gratitude."

"And from duty, from gratitude, do you mean to let yourself die of hunger, you and your family? It is not for *that* that I have watched over your career. I have studied you. Before long, I shall be able to utilize your capacities, as an imbecile administration, which could not comprehend you, has never done."

"You are very kind," I said; "but if until then I have no bread to feed my family, what can I do and what can you do with my capacities?"

"Do you suppose," he said, "that I have not thought of that, now that you have owned to me your distress?

Do you think that I have no memory and no gratitude? Am I likely to forget how you saved my life, and that of Mme. X——, from those wretches at the Trocadero? Until the prospects of my Prince are secure, through the follies of these Republicans, you will live in my house and dine with me, you and your family."[1]

"Pardon me," I replied, with emotions of gratitude and dignity struggling within me, "I cannot accept services I cannot return."

"How do you know? Do you prefer to die for the Republic which does n't want you? That is too silly. Let yourself be managed now, and later you will have only to choose the place you desire to fill. If you wish to pay your debt to me at once, I'll offer you the means."

"How?"

"By becoming my secretary."

"Become the secretary of a conspirator! I, a commissary of police!"

"How foolish you are!" he exclaimed. "Am I a conspirator now that the government against which I acted no longer exists? Am I not, in my rôle of revolutionist, a good, pure, true democrat? By employing you, I, 'one of the pure,' do you a service — I whitewash you."

[1] Mme. X—— was a woman of society, as much concerned for the interests of the Prince as M. de L——. She was one of his most trusted spies. With M. de L——, she was inveigled into a house near the Trocadero, where they were robbed, and would have been murdered if M. Claude had not received notice of their whereabouts. The Trocadero being in the Passy Precinct, he came, with the police of his post, in time to rescue them.

"Ah!" I said, doubtfully; "you may whitewash me in public opinion, but I shall blacken myself in my own eyes, inasmuch as you have just owned to me that the Republic is only a bridge to cross to the Empire."

"What next!" cried M. de L—— angrily. "O, these honest men!" he added, walking excitedly up and down. "They are full of such absurd scruples! They want to make society in their own image; as if a corrupt society like ours does n't require to be tricked. Well, well, I won't employ you in my correspondence with the Prince; I will utilize you, till I get you an employment worthy of you, on my other correspondence; and I 'll warrant that will give you, rabid Cato that you are, a rough job."

I accepted the provisional function because I could not refuse it under pain of starving to death. Thus it was that I suffered the fatal consequences of the fall of a monarchy which could no longer feed me. I became, under the guidance of the friend of Prince Louis Bonaparte, and in spite of myself, an agent of the Napoleonic party.

During my stay in M. de L——'s house, I made many interesting acquaintances, for he was much sought by persons of all classes — of rank, of letters, of science, etc. It was there that I knew the great toxicologist, Orfila (born on the island of Minorca in 1787). I often accompanied M. de L—— to his house, hôtel du Barrail, where he received, every Saturday, the *élite* of intellect and art, and the celebrities of the Operas, together with musical composers then in vogue. From

M. Orfila I heard on what a thread the condemnations of Mme. Lafarge had hung.

"If Raspail, my antagonist," he said, "had reached Tulle twenty-four hours earlier, Mme. Lafarge would have been saved."

"Why?" I asked; "were you not sure of your analysis?"

"Yes, I was," he replied, "but science played a secondary part in that trial, the conclusions of which were inspired by the very worst passions. The bourgeoisie of Tulle made it a town affair. They first turned wholly to the side of the mother-in-law. As soon as I made known my analysis the population divided in opinion. If Raspail, the adversary of official science and of the government, had arrived in time to combat me, he would have been the leader of public opinion; he would have saved Mme. Lafarge. But he came after the verdict was rendered. The court could not reverse its judgement, nor seem to yield to a rebellious citizen and savant. His tardy evidence only did harm to Mme. Lafarge."

"Then do you deny that poison was administered by Mme. Lafarge?"

"I do not deny the poison, for my report proved its existence; but I still doubt who was the person who administered it."

"Then what caused the court to be so severe upon Mme. Lafarge?"

"Politics," he replied. "Between me, Orfila, President of the Council of Chemistry, and Raspail, its

opponent, Mme. Lafarge was between hammer and anvil, and she was crushed! Even if a revolution should release her, she will come out mutilated and dying."

Twelve years after her condemnation, during the revolution of 1848, Mme. Lafarge was transferred from her prison to a hospital. In 1852 she was pardoned by Louis Napoleon and set at liberty; but Orfila was right: she died the same year at the baths of Ussat.

When Orfila died (in 1853) he left a will enjoining on his wife to keep, during her life, an open table every Saturday for all the artists in Paris who had been his guests and comrades. Mme. Orfila executed so faithfully, to the letter, these last wishes of her husband, that the day of her own death falling on a Saturday she gave her last dinner on that day, and her last sigh mingled with the notes of Beethoven.

CHAPTER V

THE COUP D'ÉTAT AND MY VICTIMS

I WAS caught in the Napoleonic machinery. Alas! I was not the only man in that position. But the men whom my function as commissary of police compelled me to arrest have since described me as an agent responsible for the crime of December. Alas! I was only an instrument by which my masters violated the law. The Legitimists, the Orléanists, who expiated their errors in the Mazas prison, were far more responsible than I for that crime, because it was they who, for their own ends, had helped Louis Napoleon to enter the Élysée. For my part, I came very near sacrificing my career (as I shall presently show) for the protection of one of them. If I was compelled to be one of the active agents of the *Coup d'État*, I acted in it according to my conscience.

The men really guilty of the *Coup d'État* were the accomplices who demolished, piece by piece, the edifice of the government of 1848, men who had a secret understanding with Prince Louis and his followers to kill the Republic; a compact that lasted until the day when one set was able to rid itself of the others by incarcerating them. M. de L—— first opened my eyes

to the proceedings of his eternal conspirator. It was but a few months after the revolution of February, 1848, that I knew the hand that was directing the riots.

The "reaction" once accomplished, as M. de L—— had foretold, I was restored to my post as commissary of police. I resumed my place after the affair of May 31, during which Ledru-Rollin, one of the authors of the fall of the monarchy, was sacrificed to his enemies. I myself felt, as I was bandied about, first as commissary of the Ménilmontant quarter, then commissary at the Batignolles, then re-commissary of the Saint-Martin quarter, the flux and reflux of the revolutionary currents, set in motion by the conspirator in London.

Each time that some serious event occurred, produced by the Napoleonic phalanx, its agents were changed from place to place, lest they should suspect the bonds that secretly attached them to the Prince. For instance: On the breaking-up of the national workshops, caused by the June affair [1848], I was recording in my *procès-verbaux* that certain insurgents who had been killed at the barricades had in their pockets gold sovereigns bearing the effigy of the Queen of England. Scarcely had I begun this inquest on the victims of June than I was sent to another post, that of the Batignolles. My inquiry stopped there. My successor took good care not to continue it, and not to inquire what bond united the director of the national workshops, M. Émile Thomas (who was abducted June 24), with the Napoleonic party.

The abduction of Émile Thomas and the assassination of General Bréa, the two darkest facts of the June affair, can be laid only to the direct action of the Prince's party. Thus the horrible riot of June, as well as the ridiculous affair of May 15, — the one fatal to Cavaignac, the other fatal to Ledru-Rollin, — were the first milestones that marked the advance of the nocturnal hero of December.

Louis Napoleon never ceased to conspire from 1831 to 1873. No sooner had the revolutionary foam carried him into the Élysée than he made that abode (from December 20, 1848, to December 2, 1851) a centre of conspiracy — conspiracy with the Legitimists and Orléanists against the Republic and the Republicans; conspiracy with the Legitimists against the Orléanists, during which both parties tried to reinforce their plots with the discontented Republicans. From this inextricable tangle of conspiracy the man of the Élysée, silent as the sphinx, made ready to issue and give the word when the moment came to put an end to a situation that was strained to the utmost.

The Prince, when I first met him in 1831 at the *Lapin Blanc*, was then conspiring under the mask of amusing himself; he never ceased to do so. On a throne, as in exile, his whole life was passed in machinations to deceive his enemies, his friends, and his accomplices. Conspirator in 1830, in the Roman States, where his brother was mysteriously killed beside him; conspirator in 1831, when, lodging at the hôtel du Rhin with his mother, he brought veterans of the

Grand Army to their death beneath the column of Vendôme to make them shout: *Vive l'Empereur!* conspirator at Strasbourg and Boulogne (facts too well known to be more than mentioned here); conspirator in 1848, after conspiring for years in London, in slums and gambling-houses, at the expense of his mistress, Miss Howard; conspirator when he offered his services to the government of the Republic, which accepted them; conspirator under the dictatorship of Lamartine, who divined him, and sent him flying by one energetic word; after which, however, he inundated the five departments with agents and circulars that won him a seat in the Constituent Assembly.

He was in Paris with the leaders of the national workshops against the army; he put obstacles (by means of the prefects and generals he had won over to the Napoleonic cause) to the coming of the provincial national guards, who desired to march to the deliverance of the capital.

Later, as President of the Republic, he completed his work on the 2d of December. I shall relate in a very brief way the events of the *Coup d'État* in which I played a secondary part; I shall dwell on one corner only of the picture, in which I followed the advice of one of its most illustrious victims, M. Thiers, who himself had been the dupe of the great conspirator.

Everybody knows that to mask the *Coup d'État* the Prince-President gave a concert at the Élysée on the evening of December 1, 1851, to which he invited all the most illustrious persons in Paris,—in the Assemblies,

in science, in letters, and in art. The composer, Félicien David, conducted the performance of his *Désert*. My Prefect, M. de Maupas, waited in the President's private office till the concert was over, in order to receive his instructions.

The chief spirit of the nocturnal drama about to be performed was at the Opéra Comique in order to allay suspicions. A lady said to him:

"Monsieur de Morny, is it true that they are going to sweep out the Chamber?"

"Madame, I don't know anything about it," he replied; "but if there is any sweeping to be done I shall try to be on the side of the broom-handle."

At midnight M. de Morny rejoined his accomplices at the Élysée. The concert was over; the guests had departed. The presidential mansion was once more in darkness and solitude. A single lamp gleamed in the private office of Louis Napoleon. It stood on a little table beside which M. de Maupas had waited a full hour, sitting before a pile of placards which, before dawn, were to cover the walls of Paris.

Morny was the last to enter the room. He took his seat between Louis Napoleon, Saint-Arnaud [Minister of War], and de Maupas [Prefect of Police]. General Magnan did not join the four others until later, and then only to take Saint-Arnaud's orders.

"If his Excellency, the Minister of War, will give me half an hour, his orders shall be obeyed," he said. The orders being given he departed.

The decrees were then signed, and Colonel Béville,

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who was waiting in an adjoining room, started with them for the National Printing-Office, where a company of soldiers stood over the printers, one to each man, until they had printed the Proclamations, which, in one night, changed the whole form of government.

During this time the Prince, who had sworn to respect and maintain the Republic, unlocked a cupboard and took from it four packets, bearing the names of the four persons present. The first, addressed to the Duc de Morny, contained 500,000 francs; he received it, together with his appointment as Minister of the Interior, and departed to take possession of that post.

The second packet, addressed to Saint-Arnaud, also contained 500,000 francs, and an additional 50,000 for Colonel Espinasse, who, during the night, was to introduce a battalion of soldiers into the Chamber of Deputies.

The third packet, addressed to M. de Maupas, contained, with money, a list of all the representatives, generals, men of letters, leaders of parties, whom he was to arrest by his Corsicans, among whom, by special favour, I was *honourably* included.

The fourth packet, and the smallest, was intended for the police of the Élysée. It contained only 100,000 francs, for the aide-de-camps, employés, spies, and agents who posted the proclamations printed under the vigilant eye of the soldiers.

The distribution made of these various sums, the Prince dismissed his accomplices and awaited in silence

and solitude the result of his *coup de Jarnac*. Smoking his cigar while he gambled the fate of France, he held himself ready to cross the frontier or take up his abode in the Tuileries.

It remains a singular thing that this conspirator had so muddled mens' minds that a very large number of Frenchmen believed that France was saved by his monstrous usurpation. The Republicans saw themselves freed from the reactionaries of the rue de Poitiers; the faubourg Saint-Germain felt itself delivered from its fear of the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and from the threats of the Red Spectre. But the very next night the secret societies, from which the elect of the nation had issued, saw themselves fooled — too late!

On the afternoon of December 1, 1851, I received an anonymous and confidential letter, which enjoined me to hold myself ready in case of an attack on the President of the Republic. The mysterious writer of the letter added that, knowing my very favourable sentiments towards the Assembly, he advised me to resign my functions if I felt any scruples about acting in favour of "the Elect of the Nation, now attacked by all parties."

I foresaw another downfall. As my conduct at the Prefecture had been irreproachable, I was given the opportunity to resign before a charge was brought against me, and a Corsican put in my place.

The letter perplexed me sorely. Rumours of a *coup d'état* were in the air. The population of Paris was uneasy, agitated. The horizon had grown dark; a

thunder-clap was everywhere expected. I felt, as others did, that the lightning was about to strike me.

But I possess a quality that my functions have developed — that of disregarding present danger, and looking only to consequences. Now this letter, in threatening me, plainly announced some great danger for the adversaries of the President, against whom I was, apparently, given an opportunity to declare myself.

I thought of M. Thiers, who, during the last session, had become the bitterest enemy of the President. With the fatal letter in my hand, I walked up and down my study, less anxious for my own fate than for that of this leader of the Prince's adversaries. I asked myself, "What ought I to do? If I resign my functions my career is ruined, and I have no money. If, on the other hand, I declare against my former benefactors, I commit an act of ingratitude, particularly towards M. Thiers."

After a short period of hesitation, I came to a resolution. I determined to warn M. Thiers, and, at the same time, explain to him my cruel position. I went at once to his little house in the rue Saint-Georges, and sent in my name. I was received by the former Minister and future President of a new Republic in his study.

I explained the object of my visit in a few words (knowing well that M. Thiers liked better to hear himself talk than to listen to others). I showed him, in support of my words, the letter I had received.

"My dear Claude," he said, in his high, clear voice,

settling his spectacles in a particular way he had when he was going to give his fixed opinion on some subject, "my dear friend, a commissary of police is a soldier of the law. He should never reason; he must only act. If you receive an order to arrest me — well, then, you must arrest me. A command, of whatever nature it is, must be obeyed. That is my reply, and my advice to you."

I was far indeed from expecting such an answer; yet it relieved me of a heavy weight. My amazement was so visible that M. Thiers perceived it, and he continued:

"In coming to me, you wished, did you not, to get yourself out of a great embarrassment? Well, I take you out of it. If to-morrow, this evening, to-night, you come with four gendarmes, and take me by the collar, I shall remain none the less your friend. I shall see nothing but the necessity that compels you to be my gaoler. Soldier of the magistracy, you can have no other thought but to obey it. And now, my friend, before pressing your hand for the service you meant to render me, permit me to blame you for not keeping to yourself advice that came undoubtedly from the Prefecture."

"But, Monsieur Thiers," I remarked, "the advice is anonymous."

"Well, that is your excuse," he replied, beginning to walk hurriedly up and down, as he always did when he grew heated in a dialogue. "But I know you, my worthy Claude; if that letter had been signed, you would have committed the folly of sending in your

resignation rather than injure me or betray your chiefs. I tell you I know you. And now," he added, stopping abruptly, "let us talk as friends: you will arrest me — that 's understood — and I shall thank you for so doing."

"What!" I exclaimed, starting up with amazement, "you will thank me, Monsieur Thiers?"

"Most assuredly," he said, with that strident laugh I knew so well when the sarcastic orator wished to conceal his anger. "I am beaten. I have tossed up, heads or tails, and brought down — tails! The Prince has won; the Empire is a fact; I told the Chamber how it would be. The Chamber had but two ways to take — either to join hands with the Prince, or to rally to the regency. It did neither. It contented itself with voting restrictive laws! Now, what remains for us to do, us conservatives? — to drop into objects of ridicule, or be poked into prison!"

And M. Thiers, as he said the last words, scurried up and down as fast as his little legs would take him. Absorbed in the gravity of the events my letter brought before him, it was evident that the ambitious diplomat, tricked by the dawning Cæsarism, had forgotten me. I made answer to his thought.

"Upon my word, Monsieur Thiers, you look at your critical position more philosophically than I should have thought."

"Because, my dear Claude, I am a politician. You may be a very clever commissary of police, but you will never be a politician — for which I congratulate you! — Come," he continued, after a moment's reflec-

tion, "I will hide nothing from you: the Prince, by arresting me, will do me a very great service."

"I don't understand," I said, more and more astonished.

"And yet it is very simple!" he cried, shrugging his shoulders, and beginning to trot again. "If Napoleon does not arrest us to-morrow, we, his enemies, will be forced to act. In that case, we put worthy men, like yourself, in a position of embarrassment. Whereas, in days of trouble like these, to imprison party men, like me, like Cavaignac, like many others, preserves them from themselves; it shelters their responsibility to their partisans; it protects our persons, and yours, from a coalition doomed from its start to defeat — I quote those words from my former friend, M. de Morny himself."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, wholly confounded. "Ah! — so then, Monsieur Thiers, if I arrest you to-morrow, by order of M. de Morny, acting for the Prince, I shall do you a service?"

"A very great one, my dear Claude," he answered, smiling, "a very great one. What do I lack that the Prince has? — prison, martyrdom! His imprisonment at Ham was a baptism; mine might be a redemption! If you knew, as I do, the inside of politics, as you know the secret things of the Prefecture, you would know that darkness reigns there, that chance is the great stake of conspirators. In 1849, Morny, Changarnier, and I dreamed of a *coup d'état* to save France from anarchy. In 1851, Morny is against Changarnier and

against me, to save France from anarchy for the benefit of his brother! And it is I — I — who, in their eyes, become an insurgent, an anarchist! Your duty is to obey your chiefs and arrest me, if they order you to do so, until the day when, chief in my turn, I will take my revenge upon your Bonaparte. On that day, my dear Claude, I will avenge you for the dirty work you are forced to do, and I 'll avenge myself! Adieu, I 'll await you; *au revoir.*"

I left the rue Saint-Georges wondering at the mental resources of the vigorous little man who took upon himself to slam the prison-doors on his own nose in order to have the satisfaction of breaking through them. As for me, I was freed from all shackles in what might be coming upon us.

At midnight I was summoned, with all the other commissaries of Paris, to the Prefecture of Police and into the private cabinet of M. de Maupas. The Prefect received us in evening dress. He had not had time, on leaving the Élysée (as I have already related), to change his clothes, so eager was he to give us our instructions.

"A conspiracy," he said, "against the President of the Republic is on the point of breaking out; we know the conspirators. The law is ready. Here are your warrants to arrest the generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière, Changarnier, Le Flô, Colonel Charras, and MM. Thiers and Baze."

As he ended these words, and while a secretary handed round the warrants, M. de Maupas came to me, who was standing a little behind my colleagues,

nearly all of whom were strangers to me. M. de Maupas drew me a little aside and said, in a low voice:

"Have you reflected?"

I knew then for a certainty who had sent me that letter.

"I shall do my duty," I answered, bowing.

I saw a gesture of surprise in the Prefect, who could not keep himself from adding:

"Then your duty goes before your affections?"

"I have a post, and I have a chief," I answered; "I shall be faithful to my post and obey my chief."

"You are a worthy man and a good citizen," he said, walking away from me.

Then, addressing all the commissaries, he said, aloud:

"*Messieurs*, all these arrests must be made before daylight."

Every one knows with what mysterious rapidity, with what sureness of hand, these arrests were made; while, at the same moment, the Chamber was invested, and its guardians, together with General Le Flô, commanding a battalion of the 42d of the line, were captured and conveyed to prison.

When Paris awoke on the morning of December 2, the *Coup d'État* was an accomplished fact. The leaders of the party, who might have prevented its execution, were in the prison of Mazas, M. Thiers at their head.

No sooner had my Prefect, M. de Maupas, spoken to me personally in his cabinet than I was plainly convinced that the confidence with which he honoured me

was very limited. Furnished with my warrant, I had not made twenty steps from the Prefecture towards my post (where I was told to await further orders) than I knew I was being dogged. A shadow never quitted mine. I pretended not to see it; but when I reached the other bank I led my spy into a strong light, which enabled me to see his profile out of the corner of my eye. By his squat figure, his vulture head, his bristling moustache, I recognized a Corsican; truly, I was well watched! The grasp of the hand and the flattering words of M. de Maupas were nothing more than honey, covering the blade of the dagger that walked behind me.

I took care not to turn in the direction of the rue Saint-Georges. Happily, and no doubt intentionally, my warrant indicated another duty than the arrest of M. Thiers. I returned to my office, where I was speedily joined by my spy, who presented himself in the Prince's name, and gave me definite orders as to the use I was expected to make of my warrant.

I was ordered to go to the various newspaper offices in my precinct and seize the presses, in case the editors, hearing of the events of the night, should print an account of them in a manner hostile to the President.

As for the "right-thinking" newspapers [*journaux bien pensants*], I was to explain the *Coup d'État* in a manner favourable to the Prince; and I was also to leave a certain number of policemen to guard the approach to these printing-offices.

This action was followed in all the printing-offices

in Paris, at precisely the same moment at which the Legislative Chamber was captured, and M. Baze and General Le Flô, M. Thiers, and Generals Cavaignac, Bedeau, and the rest were arrested in their beds by order of the President of the Republic for being ardent Republicans! Some were taken to Mazas; others to Ham — that cradle of the conspirator-prince, who now imprisoned those lovers of liberty who were the primary means of getting him out of it!

My lot of victims in the raid was the least repugnant to me. They were merely the material part of the intelligent world — now put, for the time being, under a bushel. The next morning Paris was dumb. None but the newspapers sold to the Élysée said a word of the affair, and those only in three paragraphs furnished by the future Emperor.

As for me, servant against my will of the friends of the Elysian Order, I thought what I think to-day: that France was punished because she had trifled with her destiny; because her faults came from the fault she had already committed in 1848. Without the fall of Louis-Philippe, we should never have fallen into the hands of Lamartine, a poet without an aim; of Cavaignac, an irresolute general; of Louis Bonaparte, a prince without principles.

The morning of December 2, 1851, will never be forgotten by those who walked the streets of Paris as the shops were opening, and knots of workmen, going to their day's labour, were grouped about the Proclamations, mysteriously posted up during the night,

and bearing the signatures of the Prince-President, De Morny, Minister of the Interior, Saint-Arnaud, Minister of War, De Maupas, Prefect of Police. What did it all mean? What had happened? No answer. Paris was struck dumb; minds and tongues were paralyzed. It was useless to ask questions — the walls alone replied. Placards were everywhere. One threatened death to whoso tore it down; another forbade all printers, under heavy penalties, to print anything not authorized by the Government. The President's Proclamation declared: (1) That the city was under martial law. (2) That the Assembly was dissolved. (3) That universal suffrage was established, and (most significant of all) that a general election would be held on December 14.

Presently the rumour ran that two hundred and more of the deputies of the Chamber had been arrested and put in prison; among them many of the most distinguished men in France — Generals Oudinot, Cavaignac, Changarnier, Le Flô, and Lamoricière; also De Tocqueville, Sainte-Beuve, Berryer, Coquerel, Jules de Lasteyrie, the Duc de Luynes, the Duc de Broglie, and last, but not least, Monsieur Thiers.

For hours it was impossible to form an opinion of public opinion. But as the day wore on, it dawned upon the minds of observers that the most audacious political act of modern history was likely to prove acceptable, for a time at least, to the French people. Thinking men alone were against the "crime"; and they, or their leaders, were gagged and throttled. But the shopkeepers began to scent an era of luxury. The

proletariat and the populace, caught like flies in the treacle of universal suffrage, were throwing up their caps; while the provinces, never really awakened from the Napoleonic dream, were ready to welcome the nephew of his uncle with enthusiasm.

Thus the *Coup d'État*, engineered by one visionary, two scoundrels, and three tools, and resting on the ephemeral emotions of the French people, triumphed.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLICE UNDER THE EMPIRE

AFTER the *Coup d'État* the first care of the conqueror of France was to put her under the control of the police. To this solicitude of Napoleon III (policeman himself) for his police, do I owe my rapid rise. If my backbone had been more supple, and if I had not clung exclusively to municipal affairs, I might have held an important rank at the Château. [The "Château" stands throughout for the Emperor and his surroundings.] The protection of M. de L——, now become senator, opened to me the way to fortune and to honours.

Without pretending to be a Cato, it was nevertheless repugnant to me to go against my conscience. While respecting, for the sake of public security, the man who called himself the envoy of Providence to save good men and make evil ones tremble, I could not forget the means taken to carry this "saviour" from the Élysée to the Tuileries. I was vastly pleased, moreover, when I saw with what difficulty the "Elect of the Nation" contrived to maintain himself amid the accomplices of December, — insatiable *parvenus*, shady henchmen, whose immorality equalled their cupidity;

and whose triumph could not save them from contempt.

At this period, the police were everywhere, because the secret societies, tricked equally with legal society, were arming under the orders of Mazzini; policemen were in the army, in the press, among the bourgeoisie, as well as among the lowest Parisian classes. They formed an invisible, but indissoluble, chain which led from the most ignoble dens to the salons of the Tuileries. Bacciochi and Hyrvoix — the former, the Emperor's Lebel, the latter, mayor of his palace — were the circulators of His Majesty's secret orders. They spread through Paris a vast crowd of spies, both men and women, whose mission it was to discover the personal enemies of the Empire.

Mme. X—— was one of these spies. Like many others, she had not awaited the *Coup d'État* to fasten herself secretly to the chariot of the new Cæsar. For this she was all the more trusted and the better paid.

The *chambre noire*, which I mentioned in connection with the last reign, was installed at the Tuileries as soon as Napoleon III took possession of it. It was not rare to see the sovereign himself in it with the Alessandris and the Ruminis, when those Corsicans, attached to his person, had to warn His Majesty that some new Italians had been dispatched from London, or from Naples, to attempt his life.

The informers, plotters, or *bravi*, who came to get their pay in this secret room for services rendered, had a singular way of presenting an order for the sum due.

They breathed on the glass of the door of the *chambre noire* and then wrote their names on the mist left there, together with the sum to be paid. Reading this novel cheque, the cashier of His Majesty paid the money, the creditor wiped off the mist with the sleeve of his coat, and no trace remained of the passage of the spy, who was never, at the Tuileries, a personage of a low order.

M. Lagrange, chief of the political police, was, from the moment of the *Coup d'État*, the intermediary, or rather, the point of union between the Prefecture and the private police of the Château. He was summoned to the *chambre noire* every time that the spies gave warning of a plot against the life of the sovereign. The affair of the Federal League brought into fine relief his capacity. He also distinguished himself in the arrests that followed the plot of the Opéra-Comique. But he did not foresee the bombs of Orsini; and if the dismissal of Pietri, the Prefect, for ignorance in that affair, was not followed by that of Lagrange, it was because the latter's services were more precious than those of the Prefect in the underground world of the Château police.

M. Lagrange brought weekly to the *chambre noire*, for His Majesty's enlightenment, one or more of the thirty-six thousand *dossiers* [reports on individuals], which were found in that chamber and burned by the Commune — reports in which all the adversaries of the Empire of any note, — Legitimists, Orleanists, Republicans — had their names and histories inscribed

with the date of their birth. We can imagine, therefore, the value of his functions. Through him, Napoleon III was chief spy on his subjects and, through the *chambre noire*, the Tuileries was an annex of the Prefecture.

The police of the Empire invented a new species of secret agents. They were under the absolute orders of M. Lagrange, and were called *indicateurs*. They must not be confused with the police charged with keeping order in the streets, nor with the inspectors, whose duty it is to investigate all matters affecting the public safety. Exclusively devoted to politics, these "indicators" were spread through all classes of society. They wrote to M. Lagrange under feigned names. They gave him detailed reports drawn from their intimate relations with private persons.

Mme. X—— was one of these indicatresses paid by M. Lagrange. At this period women played a very great rôle in police affairs. Unhappily, it was not the Emperor's police alone that possessed women who did this most unworthy, but very lucrative, business. The police, and also the secret societies of foreign countries, imitated, in this respect, our taciturn and secretive Emperor.

Even the Court balls were under the eye of the police. Extraordinary as it may seem, Mme. X—— and I have met more than once, without appearing to know each other, as invited guests at the Tuileries. And we were far from being the only spies there present. We had for rivals princesses, countesses, and chevaliers

of all Orders acting for the foreign police. After the war in Italy, agents of the Prussian Chancellor invaded the salons of the Emperor and Empress. These Prussian spies became so numerous after Sadowa that the Emperor was scarcely master in his own house. At the Tuileries, when he wished to speak to some great French dignitary or foreign diplomat, he was forced to take them into corners.

Paris saw, in its very highest society, princesses and countesses who came there with the mission of cajoling His Majesty and making him fall, by their beauty and charm, into the traps set for him by his enemies. I will mention two, who for years went by the names, in Court circles and police annals, of *La Prussienne* and *La Mazzinienne.*

The first of these ladies was devoted, body and soul, to Prussia. She never ceased conveying to it information as to the state of our troops and their effective force. She showed the reverse side of our military figures, of which France knew only the obverse. Through this woman the Prussians knew us by heart; while Frenchmen still believed that Prussia was the vassal of old Europe, such as Europe was before Sadowa. Yet for ten years Paris never ceased to admire this woman. All salons were open to her; the most distinguished painters have given to posterity, by their art, this bewitching creature, who has now made us pay dear for our heedlessness, our want of caution, and our blunders.

The second of these ladies, an Italian princess, was

as fatal to the Emperor personally as *La Prussienne* proved to be to France. This Italian princess was the devoted friend of Orsini, Mazzini's right-hand man,[1] and it was she who foiled the police, through her power over the Emperor, at the period when the horrible plot of January 14, 1858, was hatching—the plot that put the lives of the Emperor and Empress in peril, deluged the rue Lepelletier with blood, wounded women, children, citizens, and soldiers, and immolated nearly one hundred and fifty lives.

The part that I played (thanks to information received from Mme. X——) in that bloody affair won me my elevation to the post of Chief of Police, after the dismissal of the principal agents of the Prefecture, and of the Prefect, M. Pietri, who had allowed himself to be fooled by the agents, or rather by these female spies of the international social committees of London and Paris.

As for Mme. X——, she was a woman who, by gliding, first from mere caprice, into the most mysterious and miry paths of social life, had acquired a very great knowledge of men and things in the Imperial world. Her shrewd intellect, as unbiased and acute as that of a public prosecutor, her cruel perspicacity, carried her beyond me, a trained and experienced policeman. I knew before long that she possessed, thanks to her infernal gifts, the most terrible secrets of the Imperial Court.

[1] Felice Orsini, a descendant of the famous Orsini family, which, in the 12th and 18th centuries gave cardinals and popes to the Church. The celebrated Anne de la Tremouille, Princesse des Ursins (Orsini), married into this family.

After seizing, on the night of December 1st, as I have related, the newspaper presses in my precinct, I had the sad business, by order of M. de Maupas, of dispersing the representatives at the Chamber, or of conducting the most recalcitrant to Mazas. I have already said that my delicate, illegal, and arbitrary mission was easier to fulfil than I expected. For our country had so long been the victim of illegal acts that it now stood aloof from the struggle between the Prince and a Chamber that was wholly unpopular. M. Thiers understood this plainly enough when he received my warning on the eve of the *Coup d'État.*

At this period the conservatives, under the threats of socialism, and in the face of a double-dealing prince, were themselves outside of the law. France belonged only to the most audacious. Audacity was on the side of the Prince; it was not on the side of the Chamber, then presided over by Baron Dupin, who, when the Hall was invaded, said to his colleagues, as they rallied around him for resistance:

"There 's no help for it! Undoubtedly the Constitution is violated. We have the right on our side, but these gentlemen have the power. We can only withdraw."

The majority of the deputies who did not yet believe that might was better than right, voted to protest against the bayonets that turned them out of the Temple of the Law, where the Prince-President, "before God and man," had solemnly sworn fidelity to the Republic. The troops, having no orders to arrest the represent-

atives, merely turned them out of the Chamber; on which they met, in special session, at the office of the Mayor of the 10th arrondissement. There these two hundred and twenty members, comprising the majority of the Chamber, under the leadership of Benoist d'Azy, chose for their defender an enemy of the Republic — General Oudinot! By this choice it became an easy matter for General Forey, of the Élysée party, to carry out the orders of M. de Morny.

When General Forey, with his troops, surrounded the Mayor's office, I was sent in with some of my men to show M. Benoist d'Azy M. de Maupas's order, and require his colleagues either to disperse or be taken to the Mazas prison by a detachment of chasseurs. They chose the latter course. But when it came to escorting them to Mazas, General Forey reflected that a first batch of representatives and generals had been taken earlier in the morning through the faubourg, and that it might be dangerous to take a second. The two hundred and twenty representatives were accordingly escorted between four lines of soldiers to the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay, General Forey at the head of the convoy.

I was witness at the Mayor's office of the 10th arrondissement of the unheard-of brutality and shameful threats with which these representatives were forced to quit the room. At Mazas, in the early morning, the clerks and turnkeys had shown the same brutality to the personages they were ordered to lock up. Citizen Nadaud, brought in at the same time as M. Thiers, observed that the clerks, when they questioned the illus-

trious writer and ex-minister, were laughing at him with scoffing and sarcastic eyes.

" A little decency, gentlemen ! " cried the workman-deputy. " You have to do with the most glorious of our orators, a learned man, one of those who have done most for your cause — you, who call yourselves men of order. Cowardly, vile reactionaries ! you are ever ungrateful ! "

This exordium of citizen Nadaud did no good. They dragged him out of the warden's office without allowing him to say another word.

The cell of M. Thiers and the cell of the banker, Mirès, at Mazas have become legendary. They are still shown : the one in its rigorous simplicity ; the other, to favour the great financier, made double in size, and furnished in a manner suitable for the father-in-law of Prince Polignac ! There is another room at Mazas, on the ground floor, called the *parloir des avocats* [the lawyers' parlour], where lawyers can confer with clients who are prisoners at Mazas. Its only furniture is a table and a few chairs. At that table a strange assortment of persons have been seated, — Thiers and Cavaignac, Mirès and La Pommerais.

M. Thiers, " son of the Revolution," as he called himself, he who had planned a *coup d'état* with men who were now his gaolers, was not the only man whom the irony of fate brought to Mazas. The maker of the Column of July, who constructed that trophy to our conquests in liberalism, was sent to prison after casting his last bronze in honour of the martyrs of liberty !

Here is the story: S—— received from the State certain cannons, to be melted up for the Column of July. The metal did not prove to be what he expected, and he sold it for a low price. Devoted to his art, and too careless of his interests, the artist bought a superior metal worthy of the national work he was to raise. He then finished the present column. It is a masterpiece; unique in its capital, because the Column of July, unlike the Column of Vendôme, is in open work, without bronze plaques fastened to the masonry.

This work, which redounded to the glory of the artist, made him a bankrupt. The assignees discovered that, in order to perfect his work, he had sold the cannons of the State, thus compromising the interests of his associates, who declared themselves deceived in their good faith and defrauded of the public property. S—— expiated his masterpiece at Mazas, which faces the column. The genius of Liberty, poised at the top of the column, turns her back on the prison, and very wisely conceals from it her broken chains. The unfortunate artist hurls from his living tomb a denial of that column to which he owes his loss of liberty.

CHAPTER VII

HOW I PROTECTED THE INTERESTS OF A GREAT LADY

IN 1852, nearly a year after the *Coup d'État*, I was awakened at one o'clock in the morning to see a lady who desired to speak to me in private. The matter concerned the death of a man, so my secretary, who roused me, said; adding that there were circumstances which related to a young princess.

Before making known the object of this visit at so unusual an hour, I must, in order to explain what follows, give some account of the secretary, whom the police administration, ruled by the men of December, had appointed to assist me in my functions. Not daring to dismiss me, as they had the other commissaries of the old régime, the Napoleonic powers had given me, under pretence of assistance, a *watcher*, a Corsican, who, for the last year, had followed me like my shadow. He now waited about, after giving me the coroneted card of the lady who desired to speak with me privately; and I was actually obliged to take him by the shoulders and push him into another room before I could receive her privately.

The name of this lady, which, at that moment, pos-

sessed great authority in official circles, had evidently produced upon my secretary a cabalistic effect. In virtue of the secret mission he held from the Prefecture over me, my Corsican believed he had a right, in the interests of this lady, to be presuming. I made him understand the contrary, for which the lady thanked me; though, to judge by her convulsed features, she was greatly agitated by the event, whatever it was, that had just happened.

Mme. de Montijo (for that was her name) carried a sort of travelling-bag, filled with flasks of perfume. While she talked eagerly and with a sort of thick pronunciation, she inhaled from one or other of the flasks, which soon filled the room with a suffocating odour.

"Monsieur," she said, "I have just witnessed a terrible event. The Prince de C——, nephew of the Princesse de B——, has been found dead in his room. He has shot himself with a pistol. His death will cast desolation over all Paris. But the most terrible part of it is, that the end of this unhappy young man involves my daughter, the wholly innocent cause of his death. The Prince, who was the confidant of a friend, possessed certain letters from him, which, if they fall into the hands of the Princesse de B——, will be the ruin of our family."

"Well, madame," I said, after listening to her attentively, "what can I do in the matter?"

"Everything, monsieur; are you not the commissary of that quarter?"

"Madame," I answered, "my functions are limited to viewing, with you, the body of the Prince, and making a detailed report to the Prefecture."

"And yet," said the lady, opening another flask, "I thought that in the case of a young man of foreign birth, it was indispensable to attach the seals."

"That is so, madame; but I cannot attach them without the help of a clerk of the court."

"That is to say," she said, with a frightened look, "you cannot be alone when you fulfil that formality. Who becomes, after that, the guardian of the seals?"

"The next of kin to the deceased."

"Ah, that is the misery of it! the misery of it!" she exclaimed, with tragic pantomime, — "the Princesse de B—— is the next of kin, and she is the bitter enemy of my daughter. If she gets possession of the Prince's papers she will use them against my child, whose present suitor may withdraw in consequence of the calumnies which the death of this young man will enable his aunt, the Princess, to spread about! — Monsieur," she went on eagerly, "those letters are in the drawer of the desk of the dead Prince, in the room where he killed himself; they are in a box labelled 'Spanish affairs.' Ah! monsieur, if, by one of your agents, so skilful, so experienced, you could make those letters disappear—"

"Madame," I said with indignation, "you insult me. If you knew more of the officers of the French magistracy, you would not allow yourself to make such a proposal."

"Monsieur!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears,

"God is my witness that I did not mean to insult you. If I propose to you — at the cost of a fortune — "

"Enough, madame, enough! say no more."

"But, monsieur," insisted Mme. de Montijo, whose tenacity was one of her distinctive characteristics, "I implore you to save my daughter. She is innocent of any wrong. If the Prince is dead, it is because she returned to him the declarations of his mad passion. They are with the letters of his friend, the Duke of A——, in the box marked 'Spanish affairs.'"

"Once more, madame, I must assure you that I do not wish to know these details. Pray cease your vain endeavours to shake my conscience. You have come here to inform me of the suicide of the Prince de C——. I am ready to follow you to the house, to examine and report the suicide, nothing more."

"You are pitiless!" cried Mme. de Montijo. "You will be responsible for a misfortune deliberately planned for some time by the Prince de C——, in revenge for my daughter's rejection."

"I am responsible to my chiefs only," I said firmly, though, in truth, I was much moved by the despair of this mother.

At that moment my Corsican suddenly opened the door of the room. Furious, I was about to rebuke his indiscretion, when he explained it by introducing the physician summoned by Mme. de Montijo to report with me upon the suicide. This put an end to the scene. I started in Mme. de Montijo's carriage, with her, the doctor, and my secretary, to view the body and report

upon the death. On our way I saw signs of intelligence given by my Corsican to Mme. de Montijo, which convinced me that behind the door of my room the spy had listened to our conversation.

When we arrived at the Prince's house I found the servants in a state of great excitement. I made them take me at once to the room where the deed was done. The body lay on the floor. The ball had passed through the left breast. On the table was an open letter, written by the deceased, which had evidently been returned to him, for the seal was broken. As I bent down to read the letter, which would no doubt explain the cause of the suicide, Mme. de Montijo, trembling, her eyes full of tears, leaned over my shoulder and pointed to the last sentence in the letter, which was as follows:

"If you persist in not responding to the deep affection that I feel for you, if you treat me as the Duke of A—— treated you, I will die; yes, I swear to you I will die! And I shall not do as you did, under like circumstances, *I shall not cheat death.*"

In spite of myself, I shuddered. The body lay at my feet, proving that the Prince had kept his word. Mme. de Montijo was right in what she had said: this death was the supreme vengeance of a terrible madman!

I cast my eyes about the room to render account to myself of what must have been the last thoughts of this man before he sent himself to another world.

I did not see, by the dim light of the one lamp, the desk the drawer of which contained, according to Mme.

de Montijo, the package of papers marked "Spanish affairs." I observed that my Corsican was standing at the end of the room, with his hands behind his back, watching me attentively.

Otherwise, I was wholly absorbed in the sinister sight before us. I could scarcely detach my eyes from the being who had revenged himself on the woman he loved for a passion he had not the courage to master. I thought him doubly guilty in leaving death to complete his vengeance. To my eyes he was base, and a coward, and his dead body inspired me with no pity.

I examined his countenance attentively. He was about twenty-five years old. He had the olive skin peculiar to Spaniards, and the strongly-marked features of an artful and vindictive character. His heavy jaws, his narrow forehead, his eyes sunken in their sockets, betrayed a savage nature ruled by a malignant mind. The man could be divined from his corpse. I comprehended how it was that, unable to possess the woman he loved, he preferred to destroy himself rather than see her the wife of another. Too well brought up in a certain code to avenge himself coarsely, he had left to his heirs the opportunity of completing his vengeance.

I sat down at the table, taking possession, as it was my duty to do, of the letter, which was to figure in my *procès-verbal.* The physician, meantime, had made his examination, and was preparing his report. At that moment Mme. de Montijo, still behind me, said softly: "Thank you." It did not seem to me that my action,

which was part of my official duty, deserved any gratitude from Mme de Montijo. But I had no time to think about it, for at that moment the scene was complicated by the arrival of another person, who entered the room of the deceased like a tornado.

This person was the Princesse de B——. At sight of Mme. de Montijo, the Princess, who was not endowed with sensibility, paid no attention whatever to the corpse. She bounded like a hyena, cast furious glances at Mme. de Montijo, and came straight to me.

"Monsieur," she said, "you probably know the cause of the death of my nephew. I suspect it. But if I were ignorant of it, the presence here of madame"—here she gazed defiantly at Mme. de Montijo—"would inform me of it. Remorse has brought that woman here. But I, I have come for vengeance! Come," she said, looking me full in the face, "that unhappy man must have explained, before he died, the cause of his suicide."

"Yes, madame, he did," I answered, "in a letter which now forms part of my report."

"Give it to me."

"I cannot, madame."

"What!" cried the Princess, as confounded as she was angry; "I am the next of kin to the Prince."

"I do not doubt it, Princess," I replied; "but now that I have made an examination, as a police officer, into the death of the Prince, the matter must go to the courts, and this letter which you claim belongs before all to the law."

At this answer the Princess, who was irascible by

nature, roared like a lion. Observing that Mme. de Montijo looked at me with gratitude, she could not contain herself for rage.

"Very good," she said, "keep that letter till you receive a new order. Allow me now to use my legal right to affix the seals. But before proceeding to that formality, I shall drive out that woman. She has no right to come here and trouble this house of mourning."

It certainly was high time to think of the dead; and as the Princesse de B—— pointed like a fury at Mme. de Montijo, the latter slipped away from the scene, not forgetting to produce another flask from her bag to calm her agitation.

During this shocking scene of violence before a corpse that was still warm, my Corsican remained in the same position at the end of the room, his hands behind his back. What had he been doing while I was engaged in this domiciliary visit? I could not explain it to myself. Distrusting the man, who was my Argus, I called him to me at the moment when the two noble ladies were looking at each other like two fishwives, and I ordered him to sit down at the table and write at my dictation. He obeyed with an alacrity that seemed to me suspicious; for I certainly detected on his face a sort of fear which he was trying to hide by excess of zeal. But I had no time to give to such suspicions, for a clerk of the court arrived to affix the seals before I had finished dictating my *procès-verbal.*

The Princesse de B——, while shedding a few tears over her young relative, was, no doubt, congratulating

herself inwardly on being able to make that death a weapon of war against the daughter of her enemy. She felt certain that among the chattels of the deceased there must be a receptacle which, like Pandora's box, would yield something to bring discord and lead to a rupture between Mme. de Montijo's daughter and her present suitor. I myself feared, from what Mme. de Montijo had told me, that the vengeance of the Prince would have some terrible effect.

What the vindictive old Princess imagined as little as I did was what actually happened when the seals were removed.

The papers of the Prince de C—— were, by the influence of the Princesse de B——, taken to the Prefecture, and subjected to the investigation of M. Lagrange, Chief of the Political Division of the Police; they were also submitted to the important personage betrothed to Mlle. de Montijo, whom these papers were supposed to interest personally. But absolutely nothing was found in them that could compromise the young lady. The only paper which showed that the Prince de C—— had destroyed himself on account of the betrothed of his great rival was the letter annexed to my report, and that letter was only another proof of, and a striking homage to, the virtue of Mme. de Montijo's daughter.

I own that I myself was very much astonished at this negative result which foiled the Princesse de B——, for, shortly after, the young lady was married to the illustrious personage of her choice. Another

thing that surprised me was the disappearance of my Corsican. He never came again to my office after the suicide of the Prince de C——.

Long afterwards, when I thought no more of these matters, Mme. de Montijo came again to see me. She was then on the point of returning to Spain.

"Monsieur Claude," she said, "I cannot leave France without personally thanking you, and leaving you a testimonial to my warm gratitude."

I looked at her with amazement.

"Really, madame," I said, "I don't know what you mean."

"You remember the suicide of the Prince de C——?"

"I remember it very well, madame."

"And you forget, from discretion no doubt, that you protected the interests of my daughter under those tragic circumstances."

"I forget nothing, madame; on the contrary, I remember that my duty compelled me to refuse to conceal papers which, happily for you, existed only in your imagination."

"They did exist, monsieur; and you know it, inasmuch as it was you, no matter what you say, who removed them, by your secretary."

"Madame! madame!" I exclaimed, in a state of excitement that gave me a vertigo, "it is not so! If that scoundrel to hide his own act asserts my connivance, he lies — yes, madame, he lies odiously."

"Come, come! Monsieur Claude, don't be angry. Your anger is only another proof of your ability," she

said, smiling; "it cannot impose upon me or release me from the duty of gratitude."

"Madame," I replied, "what I told you formerly, I now repeat: I am an honest man, incapable of doing an act which should make a public functionary blush. I now demand that you tell me what that fellow did to compromise me and serve you in spite of me."

Then Mme. de Montijo, only half-convinced by my violent indignation, explained how my secretary (who must have overheard my first conversation with her) went to work to obtain the papers. The following is what she related to me:

At the moment when the Princesse de B—— entered the room like a tornado, my Corsican, who had carefully placed himself in front of the Prince's secretary, with his hands behind his back, had just opened the drawer of that piece of furniture. Feeling about with his fingers for the bundle of letters, he found them and rapidly transferred them to a pocket in his coat-tails. This explanation gave me the key to the whole affair. Of course I could then do nothing against what had already been done. Besides I should ruin myself by denouncing a man who, through venality, had done a real service to personages who held my honour, my position, my life in their hands. I said no more to Mme. de Montijo beyond refusing her testimonials of gratitude.

But I was not yet quit of the affair. Some days later, an ex-ambassador, known to be the intimate friend of Mme. de Montijo, came to me and offered

to make me, in exchange for a very small sum, one of the principal shareholders in a Society for "Chemical Products"; a society with a capital of 600,000,000 francs, founded under the patronage of my visitor. I refused the honour and the profit which the noble Spaniard deigned to offer me, under pretext that I was not rich enough to avail myself of this proof of gratitude from Mme. de Montijo who, I added, owed me absolutely nothing.

Lucky for me that I did so! The ex-ambassador, after obtaining from the adherents of the new Empire 1,500,000 francs for the costs of organizing the work of the Society, forgot to organize it, shouldered the cash-box, and crossed the Pyrenees.

[NOTE. — The Empress Eugénie, to whom this incident of M. Claude's memoir relates, was the granddaughter of Mr. Fitzpatrick, American Consul at Malaga during the early years of the nineteenth century. Mr. Fitzpatrick's wife was of Scotch descent, and claimed to be connected in some remote way with the Stuarts. They had one daughter, a very beautiful and accomplished girl, who made a brilliant marriage with the Marquis de Montijo, Comte de Teba. He died after a few years of married life, leaving her with two young daughters, one of whom subsequently married the Duke of Alba; the other, Eugénie, became Empress of the French. Madame de Montijo was admired wherever she lived; and two distinguished Americans have left on record their opinion of her.

Mr. George Ticknor, the historian of Spanish literature, wrote thus of her to his family in 1828:

"I knew Madame de Montijo in Madrid, and from what I saw of her there and at Malaga, I do not doubt she is the most beautiful and accomplished woman in Spain. Young, beautiful, educated strictly by her mother, a Scotch woman (who for this purpose took her to England and kept her there six or seven years), possessing extraordinary talents, and giving an air of originality to all she says and does, she unites, in a most bewitching manner, Andalusian grace and frankness with French facility of manners

and English thoroughness in her knowledge and accomplishments. She knows the chief modern languages well; feels their different characteristics, and estimates their literatures aright. She has the foreign accomplishments of painting, singing, playing, etc., joined to the natural one of dancing, in a high degree. In conversation she is brilliant and original; yet with all this, she is a true Spaniard, and as full of Spanish feelings as she is of talents and culture."

In 1853, Washington Irving who, for several years, was American Minister at the Court of Spain, wrote as follows to his nephew :

"I believe I told you that I knew the grandfather of the Empress, old Mr. Fitzpatrick. In 1827 I was at the house of his son-in-law, Count Teba, Marquis de Montijo, in Granada; a gallant, intelligent gentleman, much cut up in the wars, having lost an eye, and been maimed in a leg and a hand. Some years later, in Madrid, I was invited to the house of his widow, Madame de Montijo, one of the leaders of *ton*. She received me with the warmth and eagerness of an old friend. She subsequently introduced me to the little girls I had known in Granada, now become fashionable belles in Madrid. . . . Louis Napoleon and Eugénie de Montijo — Emperor and Empress of France! He, whom I received as an exile at my cottage on the Hudson; she, whom at Granada, I have dandled on my knee! The last I knew of Eugénie de Montijo, she and her gay circle had swept away a charming young girl, beautiful and accomplished, a dear friend of mine, into their career of fashionable dissipation. Now Eugénie is on a throne; and the other is a voluntary recluse in a convent of one of the most rigorous Orders."

Though the Empress Eugénie was indeed gay and even giddy from her youth, and through some years of her imperial life, no breath of real scandal dimmed her name. The story that M. Claude half tells had nothing in it that was discreditable to the young girl. It was well known at the time, and is simply as follows : Eugénie de Montijo was engaged to the Duke of Alba, whom she adored. He was faithless to her, and married her sister, with the consent of the family. The young girl suffered terribly for a time in health and spirits; and it is no wonder that Mme. de Montijo was anxious to recover letters that related to a family distress. An anecdote, told by one of the de Goncourts, throws light on one, and probably the chief, motive for her action :

The Emperor, he says, who was passionately in love with Mlle. de Montijo, was as passionately jealous of her heart. Riding together in the forest of Compiègne, he suddenly asked her if she had ever been in love

with any man. To which she answered, with the simplicity of truth: "I may have had fancies, sire, but I have never forgotten that I was Mademoiselle de Montijo."

That anecdote explains why her mother was anxious to recover the letters:— not to screen her daughter's fame, which was never in question, but to prevent the jealous Emperor from breaking off the marriage.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOMBS OF ORSINI

ON the morning of the 12th of January, 1858, I received a secret visit in my private office from Mme. X——, the Château spy. She seemed in a state of great excitement; her features were convulsed; her voice was broken by either fear or despair. I had not seen her of late; in fact, I had avoided her, and I felt that some serious circumstance must have occurred to bring her to me. I was not mistaken.

"My friend," she said, falling into a chair, "I am in despair. The Emperor is not prudent enough with his mistresses; he tells them too much, he trusts them too far."

"I do not understand you, madame," I said coldly.

"Ah, true! of course you cannot know that for several months past he has met in turn, at my house at Auteuil, an English woman and two Italians, one of whom is that duchess, *la Prussienne;* the other a princess, both of whom are affiliated with the Mazzini band."

I was stunned for a moment under this revelation. But knowing the excitability of Mme. X——, I was about to treat the matter as folly, when I remembered

the words of the petulant Marquis de Boissy, recently uttered by him in the tribune of the Senate Chamber:

"The Emperor is not cautious enough with women. His Majesty, out of regard for us and for himself, ought not to put himself at the mercy of the first hussy who comes along."

I therefore asked Mme. X——, with some excitement of my own:

"What makes you suppose that those women are conspirators?"

"I suppose nothing," she replied; "I assert. If I had nothing but suppositions I should not come here to see you. If the Château, under the influence of those Italians and that English woman, did not turn a deaf ear to my revelations, I should not be here now. But alas! I have no other hope than in your assistance, my good Claude, to open the eyes of the Minister of the Interior, the Prefect of the Seine, and the Prefect of Police, who are doing nothing and will do nothing against the dangerous confidants of the Emperor's mistresses."

For a moment I was perplexed and almost as agitated as Mme. X——. She was showing me a danger and casting me into it. Her excess of zeal had made her discover some plot which, for their own security, my chiefs evidently did not wish to know of, fearing to draw down upon themselves hatreds that might destroy their power.

I answered her rather curtly:

"If the Minister, and if my chiefs refuse to believe you, why do you expect me to believe you?"

"But," she persisted in a tone of certainty, "I have the evidence."

"Prove it to me."

"You know that Percy whose real name is Pieri? Well, he is in Paris."

"What of that?"

"I saw him come out of my house at Auteuil; he had just left the Italian Princess who comes there often to meet the Emperor, though all the Court, except His Majesty, knows she is the mistress of Orsini, Mazzini's right hand."

"That does not prove that Percy, or Pieri, has come to plot against the Emperor. To relieve your mind of that idea, I will tell you in confidence something that I have from Lagrange himself [Chief of the Political Police]. It is this: the Emperor is reconciled with Mazzini. Before long France will feel the results of this reconciliation, possibly in a war with Austria. Why, then, should the Italian Internationalists continue to send conspirators against the Emperor who now dreams only of the independence of their country."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mme. X—— impatiently; "that's all you know at the Prefecture, is it? I am not surprised that your Pietri [then Prefect] lets regicides do what they like in Paris, or that the Emperor's life is no more safe than that of a rabbit on a plain! Let me tell you that it is *since* the Emperor's reconciliation with Mazzini that the latter's party is more furious than

ever against Napoleon. This very day it has dispatched Orsini from London to checkmate this new reconciliation which will once more make Mazzini the Emperor's dupe."

It was my turn to be both surprised and alarmed at this unexpected revelation.

"But," I exclaimed, "how did you obtain these details."

"From the wife of that Percy, who," she repeated, "is not Percy but Pieri" (a man against whom, as I well knew, she had a long-standing grudge and enmity). "The woman lives in the rue de Champ-d'Asile, at Montrouge. You see I give you facts. I have not lost track of that man since he left my house at Auteuil, for a day, nor an hour, no, not a minute. I have learned that he left London January 8. He is not with his wife at Montrouge, and I have just discovered that he is stopping at the Hôtel de France et de Champagne under the name of Joseph André Percy."

"Why," I said, carefully jotting down the name and address in my note-book, — "why did n't you have the man arrested as a suspicious person who has no right to be in France?"

"Because," she replied, "I wanted to know his present object; and I do know it now, from his wife whom I have seen and questioned — adroitly. Well, this Pieri has been sent by that London committee, presided over by Ledru-Rollin, to assassinate the Emperor. He is affiliated with others, one of whom, hiding under an English name, is no other than Orsini, Mazzini's right-hand man. I have these details from Pieri's wife."

"But," I objected, "is it likely that if such a plot exists, the wife of one of the conspirators would tell such facts out of mere gossip when she must know they would bring her husband to the scaffold?"

"She may have her reasons," she replied significantly. "If this Pieri, this conspirator, has n't the courage to betray his accomplices openly, he may be glad to find, through his wife, an agent who may help him to escape the guillotine."

"My dear," I said, to shorten this curious interview, "I think that by encouraging the talk of the wife of the man who injured you, you are seeking a personal vengeance. Permit me to believe, until further proof, that the Minister and my superiors are right in not acting on your premature judgement. Nevertheless, I take note of your revelations, and of the whereabouts of this Pieri, who shall be closely watched."

"Ah!" she cried, leaving me with a contemptuous air, "you think I am acting from personal vengeance —ah! you are like all the rest! Ah! in spite of my warning, you persist in thinking His Majesty runs no great danger — Well, you will see! you will see!"

And away she went.

I own I was much shaken, in spite of my denials, by her evident belief in the truth of what she said. She certainly had cause for bitter personal hatred against Pieri; but the information she gave me coincided with some that the London police had sent to the police of Paris. M. Lagrange, Chief of the Political Police, had

been informed of the departure from London of Orsini and three other adherents of Mazzini. But neither the Minister of the Interior, M. Billault, nor the Prefect of Police, M. Pietri, had given orders to prevent any consequences that might result from this new move of the socialist committees. Either the danger was not serious, or some powerful influence was protecting the Emperor's enemies.

It was plainly impossible for me to knock down a barrier Mme. X—— had failed to overcome. I contented myself with making her information the subject of a report. It remained without answer from either the Ministry or the Prefecture.

A few days later that very report brought me upon the stage in the horrible drama that neither the Emperor nor his Minister had prevented, because a woman, the Italian Princess, had an interest in seeing its terrible conclusion — that is to say, in causing the Emperor to fall into a trap laid for him by her lover, a regicide. Two days after I had received the visit of Mme. X—— and had made my report, Paris was shuddering with horror at the frightful catastrophe that had taken place under the peristyle of the Opera House.

On the evening of January 14, 1858, the Emperor and Empress went to the Grand Opera, where the highest Parisian society awaited their coming. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who was staying at the Château, had preceded their Majesties. An immense crowd was assembled in the street, among them many policemen, at the head of whom was the famous Ales-

sandri, the officer specially charged to watch over the person of the Emperor.

This evening the Prefecture was on the watch, though tardily, in consequence of a fresh manifesto from Mazzini, published at Genoa in the *Italia del Popolo*. Each manifesto had hitherto been the signal for homicidal outbreaks; and new reports had come from foreign parts speaking of infernal machines and repeating that emissaries had left London for Paris by way of Brussels. If proper precautions on the part of the Government were not taken, it was not the fault of the subalterns of the Prefecture, nor of its agents in foreign countries.

It was on the morning of Thursday, January 14, that their Majesties announced their intention of being present at the Opera House that evening. The programme arranged for the benefit of Massol, who had just retired from the stage, consisted of three acts of *Marie Tudor*, played by Mme. Ristori, and one scene of *La Muette*. The façade of the theatre was brilliantly illuminated.

At half-past eight o'clock the imperial cortège came at a slow trot down the boulevards to enter the rue Le Pelletier. It consisted of three carriages escorted by a company of the lancers of the guard, commanded by a lieutenant, who rode close to the right-hand door of the carriage in which were the Emperor and Empress; the sergeant of the guard riding beside the left-hand door.

At the moment when this carriage, which was the last, came in front of the peristyle of the Opera House,

the two which had preceded it, occupied by the chamberlains and the officers of the palace, were already under the vaulted passage leading to a special pavilion, in which was a new stairway just constructed for the use of the Emperor.

In the same carriage with their Majesties sat General Roguet. The coachman slackened speed to enter the passage, and at that instant an explosion like a thunder-clap was heard. Fire-balls burst upon the pavement, scattering murderous projectiles. Two detonations followed the first. They extinguished all the gas-jets. Eyes that a moment before were dazzled by the brilliancy saw nothing suddenly but blackest night. In that darkness was heard the crash of glass along the peristyle, the snorting of frightened horses, the heartrending shrieks of the wounded and dying, whose blood began to flow along the roadway.

During these three explosions of this homicidal hurricane, a rain of iron and fire fell upon the imperial carriage, and gushed from the pavement upon the living rampart that surrounded the Emperor and Empress. The horses of the escort plunged around the carriage, trampling on the dead and dying. The zinc awning of the peristyle echoed under the blows of this infernal hail; the windows of the adjacent houses crashed with a din as fearful as that of the first explosions. The murderous attempt of the 14th of January, of which Mme. X—— had given warning, was an accomplished fact.

Mingling with the populace crowding the pavement,

the murderers had thrown three bombs in succession. The effects were awful. The pavements ran blood; the posters on the walls were splashed with it. Among the dead and dying, the terrified servants struggled to see, with haggard eyes, what had happened to their sovereign. The first bomb had scarcely burst among the escort of lancers, before the second exploded under the front wheels of the imperial carriage, killing the horses. If the body of the carriage had not been lined throughout with iron plates, it could not have resisted the seventy-six projectiles with which it was riddled.

At the first explosion, the Emperor attempted to get out of the carriage on the right-hand side, to seek refuge behind the peristyle. Being unable to open the door, he awaited, motionless and stupefied, as did the Empress, the end of the detonations and the carnage. The Emperor's hat was shot through by some projectile that slightly wounded his face. The Empress was also slightly wounded on the forehead. As for General Roguet, he received a wound the danger of which was not discovered until later.

Hardly had the last explosion ceased when a man with a mutilated face thrust his head into the carriage, staining the gown of the Empress with his blood. Was he the doer of the deed, seeking to know if his work was accomplished? No; his voice reassured their Majesties at once. He was Alessandri, the most faithful, the most devoted agent of the Emperor, who now flung himself before his master to make a rampart of his own body. Next, behind him, M. Lanot, Commissary of

Police at the Opera House, appeared; then M. Hébert, a police officer, and MM. Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, directors of the theatre.

The Emperor and Empress then left the carriage, assisted by General Roguet — far more seriously hurt than their Majesties. They made their way slowly to the great door of entrance. The dress of the Empress was spattered with blood; she left behind her a mound of dead and dying men, the number of whom amounted to one hundred and sixty persons. The Emperor's coachman and three footmen were seriously wounded. Two of the lancers were shot, one mortally, but he would not leave his post. When the lieutenant in command of the company called to his men asking if any were wounded, "I am," replied the lancer, raising his hand. Then he fell into the arms of a comrade and died shortly after.

A few minutes before the first explosion the police officer Hébert met, at the corner of the rue Le Pelletier, a man that he recognized as Pieri, whom my report, and also a dispatch from the agent at Brussels, had announced as having arrived in Paris January 9, with a companion, for the purpose of assassinating the Emperor. Pieri was arrested and taken, temporarily, to the nearest police station. He was found to carry a five-barrelled revolver, a knife, a dagger, a Bank of England note, and a small metal cylinder. The latter was evidently an explosive machine, for Pieri said:

"Take care! mind that, for it may do harm."

This arrest took place only a few minutes before

the first bomb exploded. Hébert, though wounded by several fragments of the projectile, made the report of his important capture instantly, being confident that he had, fortunately, arrested one of the murderers before he had been able to do his part in the crime.

It was also, thanks to my report, due to Mme. X—— that the Prefecture was immediately on the track of Pieri's accomplices, namely, Orsini, Gomez, and Rudio. It was not midnight when, in consequence of Hébert's report, I received orders to go to the Hôtel de France et de Champagne, where, as I had already reported, Pieri was stopping in company with another individual. As I state nothing in this record of my life that is not strictly correct, I here reproduce textually the *procès-verbal* which I wrote on the spot, and which is now in the archives of the Prefecture.

[This document, which is long and wordy, and full of minute details that add little to the main story, need not be reproduced here. It is enough to say that M. Claude arrested the companion of Pieri, a Portuguese, named Da Silva.]

While I was arresting Da Silva at the Hôtel de France et de Champagne, a waiter at the Broggi restaurant, directly opposite to the Opera House, found a pistol under a staging, and close beside the staging a wounded man. On being questioned, the man said his name was Swiney; that he was the servant of an Englishman, Mr. Allsop, living in the rue Monthabor, No. 10.

The true name of Swiney was Gomez, the so-called

Allsop was Orsini, and the Portuguese, Da Silva, was named Rudio.

Thus the performance at the Opera was not concluded before the police had under arrest all the actors in this bloody tragedy. While the Emperor appeared to follow with a calm and tranquil eye the scene upon the stage, wiping off now and then a few drops of blood that trickled from his slight wound, he was receiving summaries of our reports from his officers. He could not then fail to see that the conspiracy was hatched by Italian Carbonari, with whom he himself had been affiliated since 1830.

How was it, then, that Orsini, Mazzini's lieutenant, had been sent from London to commit this crime at the very moment when the Emperor was arranging with the great chief of the Carbonari to devote himself, with them, to the deliverance of Italy? Could there be schism among the Carbonari? Had they as little confidence in Louis Bonaparte's oath, as the leaders of the French democracy had when he swore his oath to the Republic? There lay the mysterious point of this frightful crime.

At this epoch, Mazzini had greatly displeased many of his partisans by accepting the alliance of Napoleon III, who had betrayed them, with Victor Emmanuel; the latter seeking to free Italy only to become himself its king.

Karl Marx, in the name of the German socialists, caring little or nothing for Italy, and Bakounine, the Russian nihilist, who was always protesting against the Mazzinian mysticism, worked themselves up to such

a point over the chief's decision that they parted from him.

Orsini, the right hand of the Patriarch of the International, angered by seeing his country doomed to monarchy, took the same course as Marx and Bakounine. He put himself at the head of a group of Carbonari and Internationalists to resist Mazzini.

Orsini first concerted, with the Italian Princess, a scheme for abducting the Emperor from the house of Mme. X—— at Auteuil. When that scheme failed, Orsini, who had taken refuge in London, turned his mind to the project of assassination:

"We were convinced," he said, at his trial, "that the surest means of making a revolution in Italy, was to produce one in France; and that the surest means of producing one in France was to kill the Emperor."

After consulting with Pieri, who made Gomez and Rudio known to him, Orsini, chivalrous by nature and trained in the Mazzinian school, perceived that these accomplices were common rascals, incapable of comprehending his aspirations. He then spoke of his projects to an Englishman named Thomas Allsop, and to a French refugee in London named Simon Bernard. Allsop (whose name Orsini took later) was an ardent Chartist, and the intimate friend of Robert Owen, the socialist. As for Simon Bernard, he was a fanatic, who, like Karl Marx and Bakounine, dreamed of regenerating society by a radical transformation.

From this combination of these adversaries of tyranny sprang the savage idea of explosive bombs. They

were to be called "Orsini bombs," because that lover of the Princess felt himself in honour bound to assume the whole responsibility of a crime inspired by his love for the country which was his and hers.

Gomez has told how this new association of regicides was formed. Meeting Orsini and Bernard in a London street, Gomez invited them to come the next day to his lodgings in Grafton Street. "During this visit," adds Gomez, "Orsini remarked to Allsop, Simon Bernard, Pieri, and me that the Prophet (the name given to Mazzini) was losing his vigour; that his enterprises ended only in getting men uselessly shot. He then told us of certain explosive bombs which he had ordered in Birmingham by the assistance of the Englishman Allsop. He said he had got the idea in Belgium where he had seen, in a museum, bombs of the same kind made in 1854 for the purpose of killing the Emperor. He ended by saying that the explosion of these bombs would be fireworks let off in honour of the triumph of a Universal Republic. Bernard, the 'clubist,' who travelled constantly from Germany to Belgium, was to inform the secret committees of France, Italy, and Belgium of the exact moment when the bombs would be thrown in order to envelop with a like deed all supporters of tyranny."

Thus, as it will be seen, Mazzini was not in the plot. He could not be — he who accepted an alliance with crowned parvenus and constitutional kings for the purpose of arriving, by slow but sure steps, at a Universal Republic.

Mazzini, by his intellect, was infinitely superior to the lovers of liberty who surrounded him. He was never what common minds have made him — an apostle of murder. He has condemned in his writings the errors of our first Revolution, which, in supporting itself by terror, gave birth to the most odious of despotisms — military despotism. Although Mazzini did too often threaten with a dagger princes who had risen, like Napoleon III, on the shields of a mysterious army, he did so only when excited to irritation by his overpowering love for humanity, whose cause such princes were betraying while pretending to defend it. He had no more dangerous enemies than his brother Carbonari, for Mazzini detested atheism. Yet Bakounine, his adversary, said of him:

"He has the gift of entering the souls of all who approach him, warming them by the beams of his intellect, by his glance at once serious and gentle, and his shrewd but melancholy smile. Whoever sees and listens to him lets his mind and his heart be captured willingly. Never thinking of himself, always of those who come to tell him of their wrongs, Mazzini compels the confidence even of those who are most distrustful, and the return to him of all who have alienated themselves from him, either through impatience or ambition. Such, fundamentally, is this terrible revolutionist, the founder of the 'International,' who has done such harm, and will do more, to the old society."

Mazzini was a mystic; Orsini a fanatic. The latter desired, like the new dissenters from the "Interna-

tional," an immediate Republic, a Republic *quand même.* When the Patriarch declared in favour of the union of Napoleon III with Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, the rupture between himself and Orsini took place. The latter was a dangerous dreamer, like other would-be Seers, who ruin their cause with equal clumsiness and heroism. The Italian Princess who was devoted to him had the same enthusiasm of nature and the same heroism. She had also the same antipathy to Napoleon III; not because she was, like Orsini, republican, but because, on the contrary, she desired, as an Italian, that the House of Savoy should reign over the whole Peninsula without the aid of foreign intervention. She wished, like Orsini, that Italy should *make herself;* she dreaded the bad faith of the Emperor, and foresaw that he would fail his allies. It was she who decided Orsini to detach himself from the Prophet, when the latter arranged with Cavour the means of forcing Napoleon III to declare war upon Austria.

The objections which the patriotic Princess made to Mazzini's scheme struck, through Orsini, the minds of a great number of the Carbonari. The excitement was great in the "International," which henceforth worked under the orders of Orsini and without reference to its founder and Patriarch. Then it was that the Princess, Orsini's soul, inspired him with the idea of abducting the Emperor. It was the failure of that abduction which led to the fatal plot of the Orsini bombs.

Mazzini became almost abandoned. He resigned himself quietly, looking afar. The short-sightedness of

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his late followers only deepened his contempt for men. He isolated himself like a god, certain that his judgements would be justified sooner or later; very certain also that his apostles, who had departed from him with sorrow, would return to him as soon as they failed in their own projects and had seen their mistake.

His certainty was justified. When the plot of the bombs failed, its ill success arresting the social movement and giving stronger power to the imperial régime, Orsini and his accomplices comprehended at last that in order to triumph it is not enough to have an iron temperament; it is also necessary to have, like Mazzini, the nature of a statesman. Vanquished in both plots, dragged to the scaffold for not having listened to Mazzini, Orsini surrendered — too late for himself, but not for his cause — to the diplomatic judgement of the Prophet.

It was Mazzini who, conjointly with Napoleon III and Victor Emmanuel, dictated to Orsini the famous *policy* letter, in which the relentless enemy, the enemy *quand même* of the Emperor, was made to say that "his father had joyfully shed his blood for Napoleon the Great; and that he himself, in marching to the scaffold, made but one prayer, namely, that His Majesty, Napoleon III, would deliver his country, and thus secure for himself the benedictions of twenty-five millions of citizens throughout posterity."

Evidently these thoughts could not be those of Orsini; they were dictated to him by the subtile Mazzini, who, himself, did not believe one word of the

letter, written to rouse the *chauvinism* of the French people, of which, in the interests of his country, he stood so much in need. The Italians are true sons of Macchiavelli. Orsini's letter, read before the judges by his counsel, Jules Favre, with permission of the Emperor, was a veritable triumph for the defender of the foreign regicide, by which he profited to spread before an excited public, eager for liberty, a profusion of the finest flowers of rhetoric — all poisonous.

Orsini, by way of recompense, left, in his will, the sum of eight hundred francs for a watch which the Italian Princess purchased and sent to Orsini's defender with inscription graven on the case:

To Monsieur Jules Favre, Felice Orsini

SOUVENIRS

I was witness of these incidents, being stationed in the corridor on which the cells of persons condemned to death open. Orsini, who distrusted the very walls of his cell, carried with him to another world many secrets concerning the murderous attempt of January 14.

I think I have now said enough to show that in this bloody tragedy the Emperor, Mazzini, Cavour, and Victor Emmanuel were essentially in accord with Orsini to expel the Austrian oppressors from Italy. If Orsini paid with his head for his crime, it was less because he had aimed at Napoleon III and shed French blood than because he had disobeyed Mazzini, his Carbonaro brother. This tragedy, which alarmed all conservative France, was, in the end, a sort of comedy played be-

tween the conspirators and the princes. The Emperor, had he dared, would have spared Orsini's life, as he did spare those of Rudio and Gomez. But in vain did the Empress persuade the Emperor to have mercy, calling to her aid the Archbishop of Paris; Marshal Pélissier, in private conference, showed the sovereign that here was a case in which he had "not the right of pardon." In a speech full of plain common sense, the Marshal proved to the Emperor that this right was withdrawn from him in a case where French blood had been shed on his behalf by regicides.

On the 13th of March, 1858, the scaffold was erected for the two men. Orsini and Pieri, barefooted, swathed in black veils, the veil of parricides, were exposed on the scaffold, while a clerk read to the assembled people the sentence of condemnation. Pieri went first to execution. He died noisily, repeating in a jerky, stammering voice, the *Chant des Girondins*. Orsini came after him, calm, silent, uttering two sentences only: *Vive la France! Viva Italia!* He died, as he had always lived, fearlessly.

The Billault Ministry fell with the regicides. The Emperor replaced it with that of General Espinasse. M. Pietri yielded his place as Prefect of Police to M. Boitelle, an ex-captain of lancers.

As for me, when chance and the information derived from Mme. X—— enabled me to play so active a part in the capture of the conspirators, I became a hero among the staff of the Château; I stood even higher than the Corsicans. It depended only on my own will

whether I should be specially attached to the person of His Majesty, and take the place of Baron Griscelli, dismissed, like my Prefect, in consequence of the Orsini affair. But I refused all employment which might compromise my independence and give me a party character, which my adversaries, however, did not fail to give me, under the Commune, to satisfy their hatred and rancour.

I contented myself by accepting, in 1859, as a reward for my services, the position of Chief of Police [*chef de la police de sûreté, i. e.* the criminal and detective police]. This situation, on account of my tastes, my temperament, and my character, was to be, I felt, the culmination of my career.

As a result of the various negotiations that I had on this subject with the Bacciochi and the Hyrvoix, I came to know the famous *cabinet noir* (called *chambre noire* during the Empire), which, under the other reigns, was never so near the throne as it now was. In spite of the burning of the Tuileries, there can still be seen, on the side towards the quay and next to the new Louvre, a small tower standing back from the angle of the pavilion of the palace. It was by a staircase in that tower that the Corsicans, the Alessandris, and the Griscellis, attached to the person of His Majesty, went up to the *chambre noire* under instructions from M. Lagrange (Chief of the Political Police), from the Prefect, and from the Minister of the Interior. The Italian Princess, the Prussian Duchess, and Mme. X—— often took the same way; and so, likewise, did Orsini's sister after the attempt of January 14.

It was by that staircase that I, too, went to tell the chamberlains of His Majesty that my ambition was not to take the place of those who, in the affair of the bombs, had so ill-guarded the Emperor. It was after having thus been in the *chambre noire* that I passed through the Tuileries to install myself as officer of the peace at the Prefecture of Police.

From that period a new career was opened to me, full of dramatic incidents due to the celebrated thieves and assassins which my duty required me to hunt down before delivering them over to the assizes.

CHAPTER IX

BÉRANGER — HIS FUNERAL

IN 1857, while I was still commissary at Ménilmontant and at the theatres, political refugees, who dreamed of vengeance for December, kept the faubourgs in a state of unrest. The police of M. Lagrange were worn out tracking from London to Paris the emissaries of Mazzini and Ledru-Rollin.

At this period, which was scarcely a year before the catastrophe at the Opera, a so-called refugee, in other words a police spy, the daily companion of Ledru-Rollin, came from London to Paris to inform the Prefecture that Béranger having just died, the London committees had dispatched delegates with orders to turn the funeral of the national poet into a great popular manifestation. In my quality as commissary of the quarter in which these delegates were to act, I was charged with the duty of seeing that the respectful homage which France desired to pay to the poet of the Republic and the Empire did not degenerate into a collision, as the victims of December fondly hoped.

I, who had known Béranger personally under rather singular circumstances, knew how he dreaded the noise of his fame. I therefore determined to take every care

that the legitimate homage of the people for their poet should not be degraded by a scandal.

I must here tell how it was I came to know Béranger. Not long before his death I was summoned to the central office and ordered to search for an escaped prisoner whom I had arrested six months earlier. He was a very clever swindler who claimed to be a merchant and broker. After establishing several brokerage offices, where he obtained thousands of francs from ignorant and credulous persons under pretence of investment, he was condemned to three years' imprisonment. The scamp had now managed to escape. Information was sent to me from the central office that he had returned to Paris and was junketing in the Latin quarter as a rich student and consorting with very questionable ladies at Bullier's and the Café Mazarin.

As I had known my individual for a long time and had not forgotten either his face or his general appearance, I assured my colleagues that I should easily find him.

"Take care," replied the central commissary, smiling, "that rascal is very clever; he has as many tricks in his bag as a monkey. Don't sell your bear's grease before you have killed your bear."

This remark put me on my mettle. I was accustomed to trust chiefly to myself in all difficult arrests, and I now resolved, out of vanity, to rely on my own experience, and personally to capture the scamp who, so far, had eluded the police and defied the magistracy. One evening, on receiving certain information, I went

alone to the *Closerie des Lilas* at the hour when the dancing is at its height. I had no difficulty in discovering my man, seated among a swarm of pretty girls and bewitching *danseuses*, whom I knew to be the beauties most in vogue in the Latin quarter.

Convinced that there are but two ways of getting the better of a cunning enemy — surprise and audacity — I walked straight to where my rascal was seated. I walked slowly, with steady steps, my eyes on the eyes of my man. He was a dark-skinned, handsome fellow, with a face as brazen as it was cynical. I saw by an imperceptible sign that he recognized me. He turned pale — he was mine!

I was almost near enough to capture him, when I saw him bend to the ear of one of his companions. Instantly all the girls surrounded me and stood in a feverish, excited, ardent phalanx before me. They formed an impenetrable barrier behind which my rascal escaped, while the whole swarm of beauties pressed eagerly upon me, crying out:

"Béranger! It is Béranger!"

That magic name produced upon the youthful spirits there present the effect of an electric spark. All the dancers of the establishment stopped dancing and surrounded me with acclamations; the students, the young girls rushed from the groves, some bearing bouquets, others glass in hand. I was literally covered with flowers, while the whole place rang with shouts, a hundred times repeated, of *Vive Béranger! Vive Béranger!*

I was aghast, and yet I understood the trick of my

clever scoundrel. On the point of being collared by me, he had recourse to this shrewd game, which must have succeeded even better than he expected. I certainly had some points of resemblance to the illustrious song-maker, or the whole world of students and grisettes in the Latin quarter would not have fallen so readily into his trap. I was as bald as the poet at that time; and at all times I have had a certain good-natured, sympathetic benevolence in my appearance, such as the portraits of Béranger show to this day.

Well! if the youth of Paris countersigned the intentional error of my clever scamp, I owed it to my resemblance to the poet. Though I was tricked, I was well tricked. It was not for me to own to these young giddy-pates that I was not Béranger, but Claude the policeman, the agent of all the prosecutors, judges, lawyers, who, under the Restoration, had done so much harm to their idol. For my dignity, as well as for that of the poet, I could not destroy the pedestal that this brave and gallant youth had raised to its hero. I escaped from the ovation, which was becoming delirious, under an avalanche of flowers, and while the orchestra was playing, in my honour, the well-known air of Béranger's "Lisette."

The next day all the newspapers related the visit of Béranger to the *Closerie des Lilas*. "The poet of 'Lisette' and 'Frétillon' had gone to revive his genius," they said, "amid the youth of France." As for me, I took good care not to relate to my colleagues the ovation I had received at the instigation of their

shrewd delinquent, whom, by the way, I captured soon after.

But I did earnestly desire that the illustrious song-writer, whose character I respected as much as I revered his genius, should not feel insulted by the misuse of his name. Accordingly, after reading the articles I have mentioned in the press, I called at his house, 3 rue de Vendôme, now rue Béranger. I asked to speak with him in private, not sending in my name, because I thought that Béranger must be annoyed by this ridiculous story, told in all the newspapers, and might refuse to see a police officer, fearing some further annoyance.

I was received by an old man with bent head and a shrewd smile, that recalled to me the simple, old-fashioned countenance I had seen in the frontispieces of his various works. For a moment, moved by this sight of the poet of our national glories, I could not speak. Then I explained the purpose of my visit; I gave my name, and related the successful trick by which, like the ass laden with relics, I had been compelled to usurp his great name; adding that I had now come to offer my excuses.

At this the old man burst into a roar of laughter with such gusto that my idol fell shivered from the pedestal on which I had long placed it. Evidently my face betrayed displeasure at this hilarity, which seemed to me almost offensive, for the good man suddenly checked it, and said:

"My dear sir, I am no more Béranger than you were. If I take his place and receive his visitors occa-

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sionally, it is to save him from importunate persons, coming from all parts of France, who assume the right to force themselves upon him on the pretext of presenting their homage."

"Then, may I ask who you are?" I said, still rather displeased.

"Benjamin Antier," he replied.

"The author of 'Robert Macaire'?"

"Precisely," he answered. "You will easily understand that no one could live fifty years with a friend, sharing his tastes and his solitude, without acquiring something of his personal appearance."

He said no more, but went to the door of the next room and called his friend.

Béranger entered, leaning on the arm of an aged woman. I own that at first I felt a certain disenchantment on beholding a decrepit old man, with tottering steps, a withered face, glaucous eyes, and a pendant lower lip.

But presently, athwart these ravages of age, I saw in those faded eyes a poet's gleam, on that broad, bare brow a pure, serene light that seemed the halo of a man so simple and so great. A certain majesty was thus imprinted on his features, worn by illness. I saw the man of peace, of silence, and of meditation; the man averse to noise, even the noise of his own fame; living a wholly interior life, declining all outward expansion the better to abide in the sweet intimacy of a few friends. Time had now left him but two of these—Benjamin Antier, the first and last companion

of his studies and his pleasures, with whom he wrote his first song; and Mme. Judith, his last Lisette, his *Bonne Vieille*, the inspirer of his last poem:

You will age, my tender mistress,
You must age, and I must die;
Time for me, with its cruel swiftness,
Goes twice as fast as in days gone by.
When the languor of years o'ertakes you,
To my lessons still be true;—
Dear old friend! in your chimney corner
Repeat the songs that I sang to you.

Eyes will seek beneath your wrinkles
The lovely face that inspired my song;
Youth, in its eagerness, pressing round you,
Will say: "Who was he she has wept so long?"
Tell them then of my love and its ardour,
Its doubts, its fears, and its passion true,—
Dear old friend! in your chimney corner,
Sing them the songs that I made for you.

When they say to you: "Was he kind?"
I hear you answer: "I loved him so!"
"Was he unfaithful in heart or mind?"
Proudly your lips will ring out: "No!"
Ah! tell the young of his joyous zither,
Tender and sensitive, loving and true,—
Dear old friend! in your chimney corner
Sing them the songs that I sang to you.

You, whom I taught to weep for France,
Say to the sons of her latest fame,
That I sang her glory, the glory of France,
To comfort and help her in days of shame.
Call to their minds the terrible blast
That carried our laurels the wide world through,—
Then, old friend! in your chimney corner
Sing them the songs that I sang to you.

Dear, cherished heart! when my futile fame
Soothes the pain of declining years,
When your feeble hands my portrait frame
With flowers that bloom in spite of tears,
Lift your eyes to the unseen world,
Where we shall be one who now are two,—
Dear old friend! in your chimney corner
Repeat the songs I have sung to you.[1]

When I explained to Béranger the object of my visit, asking him humbly if I should correct the mistake of the newspapers, caused by the trick of my rascal, he replied, in a sweet, sympathetic voice:

"Ah, monsieur! why undeceive the young? Disillusion comes soon enough. We, ourselves, do we not live to our last hour in errors? They were happy, those young people, in believing that they saw me. Leave them in that error. They will know too many more before they die."

I left him. He bowed to me, like a patriarch blessing a man whom he sees for the first and last time at the close of his career.

This visit to Béranger — his fading eyes, his tottering steps supported by his *bonne vieille* — affected me deeply. When, therefore, on the occasion of his death, the democratic party sought to make him a brand of discord to provoke a riot, I took strong measures to protect his funeral. The Emperor sent his carriages and his household guard, with loaded rifles; and I warned my strong force of police to watch each corporation of workmen, as it marched with banners flying, and prevent them from breaking the line of the guard.

[1] A liberal, not a literal, translation.

I, myself, mingled with the crowd and soon discovered under many an "International" blouse, wreathed with *immortelles*, a Mazzinian dagger. As we neared the canal Saint-Martin, I perceived that the crowd was swelling more and more, and trying, by advancing single file, to surround the hearse. An inspiration then came to me which I communicated to the officers of the guard, who, seeing the critical position in which the delegates from the London committees were striving to place them, accepted it eagerly.

The guard held back the crowd at the narrow entrance to the bridge, and the moment the hearse had passed the centre of it, they swung the drawbridge open. Thus the way to Père-Lachaise was clear to none but Béranger himself, his friends, and the carriages and guards of the Emperor. The London committees were foiled, and the poet was buried as he had lived — in silence and serenity, far from the noise of even his own glory.

CHAPTER X

JUD, THE MYSTERIOUS ASSASSIN OF A JUDGE OF THE IMPERIAL COURT

IN 1860, imperial France was happy — apparently. Our conquests in Italy, giving us Nice and a part of Savoy, lent the Empire a prestige that dazzled common minds. It was not, however, necessary to be a great seer to perceive that each step forward in the haphazard policy of an emperor of expedients brought him one step nearer to his fall.

One cannot give to others what one denies to one's self. The Emperor, by killing in France the liberty on which he had risen, could not labour seriously for the independence of other nations. The prestige which, in the eyes of the people, shone around the self-interested supporters of the December-trap, excited only envy in foreign countries, particularly in Prussia. Prussia had already stopped our Emperor in Italy. In 1860, the Prussian Chancellor, who owed his European authority, in the first instance, to the policy of Napoleon III, was working, out of hatred for the latter, not to give him, as did Victor Emmanuel, a share of the cake. Bismarck was waiting, on the contrary, for the hour when he could get Alsace away from him, in defiance

of the duties of gratitude which obliged him to return to France her former Rhine provinces in acknowledgement of the services which Napoleon III, by his attitude towards Austria, had rendered to King William. But in diplomacy, gratitude is a puerile word, void of meaning, especially to Prince Bismarck.

Towards the end of 1860, the most prosperous and flourishing period of the imperial reign, a great crime darkened its horizon with a heavy cloud that alarmed even the most enthusiastic upholders of the new régime. This crime was the first thunder-bolt, the first mysterious protestation, falling upon that imperial world, to remind it of its bloody and baneful origin. A magistrate, a judge of the Imperial Court, and very devoted to the Emperor, M. Poinsot, was assassinated in a railway carriage on the Eastern Railroad by a man named Jud, an Alsatian and a native of the Upper Rhine.

The assassin, travelling alone at night with the judge, had been able to do the deed and escape from the carriage without leaving any trace of himself. It was not until the train reached Paris that the compartment in which M. Poinsot travelled was opened and his body discovered. The facts, so far as known, were immediately sent to the Prefecture, and confided to me as chief of the criminal and detective police. I was summoned to the office of the Imperial *Procureur* [prosecutor] and ordered by the Prefect to put all my agents and myself at work to discover the unknown murderer.

This order was given to me on the 10th of December, the murder having been committed on the night of the 5th and 6th. Thus the murderer had ample time to escape detection. When the body was discovered, the brain exuded on all sides. The murderer had fired two shots from a revolver, one taking effect in the temple and coming out on the opposite side of the head; the other near the heart, but this ball was found in the clothes. Judging by the articles that were evidently missing, robbery appeared to be the motive of the crime, the criminal himself remaining a myth.

On the other hand, it seemed as though a certain relation must have existed between the murderer and the victim. From the way in which the wounds were given it was evident that the murderer, before committing the crime, had held the judge in his power, and that the two must have had some intercourse during the night. What could have been the nature of that conversation between a miserable assassin and a personage of so much importance as M. Poinsot? Here was a mystery. There was no doubt that the criminal was very inferior in position to the judge, for on the seat beside the body they found a muffler, evidently left by the murderer, of a kind that is not worn in France. This muffler and a very common snuff-box, also left in the carriage, were valuable indications for me, but the only ones.

Could it be that M. Poinsot, who was not known to have an enemy, could he be the victim of a bloody ill will, of an odious vengeance? Here was another pro-

blem to add to the rest. M. Poinsot was in great favour and the most respected of all the magistrates. No one held higher than he a sense of the duties and responsibilities attached to the function of judging others. Very much liked at the Château, he owed the welcome he received at Court to the uprightness of his character.

He had been in his present position, as judge of the Imperial Court, eight years, when on a Saturday, taking advantage of Sunday being a holiday, he went to his country-seat in the department of the Aube, to receive his rents. Having done so, he started to return, as I have said, by the Eastern Railroad. On the arrival of the train in Paris his dead body, still warm, was found.

Consternation was general. It was shown even by the crowd in the streets when the funeral of this great magistrate took place at the Church of Saint-Louis d'Antin. Out of respect to a colleague whose honoured life had ended in so tragic a manner, all the judges of the fourth chamber, wearing their robes, together with other high officials, accompanied the coffin. After the religious services, the body was taken to the Eastern Railroad, and conveyed to Chaource, the estate M. Poinsot had visited so recently. All our noted lawyers, even those in the ranks of the Opposition, made it a matter of duty to accompany the remains of a man who stood high among all parties for the loftiness of his mind and the importance of his office. Jules Favre and Berryer were among them.

As the partisan spirit does not disarm even before

an open grave, Jules Favre said to Berryer, who was beside him :

"This is what it costs to stand too well with the Château."

I was in the funeral procession, and I overheard those words. I was there, I must own, less to do honour to the deceased than to gather the remarks of those who knew M. Poinsot, and thus obtain, if possible, some clue as to the cause of the murder. I put myself intentionally among his political adversaries, because I knew by experience that it is not the friends of a dead man who unveil the secrets of his life.

Lucky for me that I mingled with the group around Jules Favre and heard those bitter words of the bitterest of our lawyers! They were to me a flash of light. They sent a gleam upon this affair into which I could not see clearly, even after my multitudinous investigations along the line of the Eastern Railway. In vain had I sent my agents right and left from every station along that road. Not one of them reported anything that gave even a clue to the murderer. It was plain that the latter, after committing the crime, had jumped from the carriage to the track, and had done so hastily — the muffler and the snuff-box left behind him proved his haste.

But how could a man jump from an express train, running at high speed, without risking his life or breaking his legs. The body of his victim being still warm when discovered showed that the crime had been committed near Paris. But why had the murderer waited

until then instead of profiting by the time when the train was crossing the open country?

I explained to myself this discordance on examining the line. The man must have jumped from the carriage near Noisy. The express train does not stop at Noisy, but it slackens speed there sufficiently to allow a man to jump to the ground without breaking his legs. Had the assassin made for Paris? or had he fled through the country to reach the province of which he was a native — judging by the muffler made in a Mulhausen factory, and by the snuff-box, which I recognized as a product of the region of the Black Forest?

I left my agents exploring the most suspicious parts of Paris, searching the lodging-houses and pawn-shops, to discover some traces of the murderer, while I myself went, as I have said, with the funeral of the judge to Chaource, his estate in the country. There I learned from his confidential valet that on the Sunday evening, as M. Poinsot was preparing to return to Paris, he was visited by an individual whom the servant described to me. The conversation between this person and M. Poinsot had lasted a quarter of an hour, and the servant told me that the subject of it must have been important to detain his master, who was already in a hurry to get to the train.

I was now on the scent of the murderer. Whence came he? From Alsace, no doubt; his muffler told that. To venture to present himself to M. Poinsot and be admitted, being, as he was, a very common man, showed that the pretext for his visit was serious. That

this high magistrate should spend a quarter of an hour talking to a poor wretch at the risk of losing his train showed that the man had some powerful reason that compelled it. The words of Jules Favre came suddenly back to me:

"This is what it costs to stand well with the Château."

Yes, politics might, perhaps, have something to do with the shocking event. Once more — what relations could possibly exist between this important personage and this unknown man? I determined to solve that mystery in the first place. In spite of the grief that overwhelmed the family, I decided to make known my name and mission to the nearest relatives. From them I learned that M. Poinsot had not gone to Chaource solely for the purpose of receiving his rents, but also to obtain certain papers which, he had informed them, concerned the Château.

There was the explanation of Jules Favre's words! In virtue of my discretionary powers, I opened the strong-box in which M. Poinsot habitually kept State papers, which, he was wont to say, might some day or other be useful to him as a magistrate and serve to throw light upon the more obscure affairs of the Empire. In addition to these papers he kept in the same box the money he received in banknotes from his rents. When the strong-box was opened there was nothing there; the State papers as well as the banknotes had been removed; probably M. Poinsot had placed them in the varnished leather bag he had carried in his hand.

That bag, having been taken by the murderer, was another explanation of M. Favre's words. The robber-assassin was something other than a murderous thief.

I returned to Paris with a careful description of the man, whom the valet had had time to examine before M. Poinsot left the house. I made my report to the Prefect and then proceeded to look through the police registers. I had already recalled the fact that about three months earlier a deserter from the 3d dragoon regiment named Jud, had committed a crime similar to that committed on M. Poinsot. On the 18th of September, 1860, this Jud had killed a Russian army surgeon in a railway carriage between Zilischeim and Ilfurth, by shooting him through the head with a revolver. Being captured in his native town of Ferrette, this Jud managed to escape by knocking down three of the gaolers. Since then the police had been unable to find him, but his description tallied in every respect with that given me of M. Poinsot's murderer. Evidently the criminal of Noisy could be no other than the Jud of Ferrette.

Not a day had passed since the murder that reports of his discovery were not sent in only to be denied before night. One day he was thought to be found at Bar-le-Duc; another day at Bixheim, or at Mulhausen, or at Troyes. But each and all of these Juds were released as soon as arrested. The public was beginning to consider Jud as a will-o'-the-wisp, scoffing at the police; and as for us, he became a thorn in our sides. The Opposition was delighted with our want of success. Unable to attack the Government directly, they fell

foul of its subalterns; the servants were thrashed for the masters. Jud was the rod with which they flayed the Empire in the persons of its humblest supporters. He became the grotesque incarnation of Imperialism, just as Robert Macaire and Mayeux had personified Louis-Philippe.

Weary of the ill success of my agents, I resolved to go myself to Alsace and find in Jud's own region indications that would satisfy me better than those I received in Paris. I informed the Prefect and the examining judge of my intention, and they gave me *carte blanche.* Before starting I obtained the services of an agent, a former non-commissioned officer, whose courage was beyond all doubt. A native of Alsace, he knew the country well and could be a great help to me as guide.

I also paid a visit to the clerk of the examining judge [*juge d'instruction*] to tell him that I should send to him daily the results of my researches. This man, also a native of Alsace, had a gift of penetration coupled with envy which he artfully concealed under an appearance of open-hearted good-nature. When I told him of my journey and its object, he looked at me curiously and said:

"May you never repent doing what has never been done before in this administration."

A doubt crossed my mind, and I regretted having spoken to him so freely. I made a motion that did not escape his subtle observation, and he added with an innocent air:

"Well, a good journey to you, Monsieur Claude;

may you be rewarded for your zeal, which will hurt our chiefs — but, I understand! duty before everything."

I started for Ferrette [in the Upper Rhine, district of Mulhausen] accompanied by my agent, whom I knew to be a determined man. I was aware, through the police reports of those regions, that the German frontier was kept agitated and stirred up by Prussians. But what I did not know was that those reports were far below the truth. I was better informed by the time I reached Mulhausen. Prussia, envious of our conquests, was exciting the ancient rancour of Protestants against Catholics with a view to a revenge which, far from restoring to us the Rhenish provinces, would recover from us Alsace and Lorraine, and throw us back into the critical position of Louis XIV, when expiating in his day a passage of the Rhine.

On arriving at Mulhausen with my agent, we were both much astonished by what we saw and heard. The Italian victories excited no enthusiasm. Outside of the official world I found a population concerned only about the commercial disturbance caused by the change of frontier. In the Upper Rhine religious fanaticism was being roused by jealous Prussia. The Protestants formed a band apart from the Catholics, and proclaimed themselves openly against the conquest policy of the new Empire. Under pretext of progress and of humanity, the richest Protestants of the annexed region renewed against the Catholics the old feuds of the seventeenth century. They pointedly recalled that Mul-

hausen before Louis XIV and Napoleon I was a "free city." I could see in these politico-religious divisions the hand of Prussia preparing to act at the moment when France, exhausted, could not sustain, as she did under Louis XIV and Napoleon, the first brilliant onslaught of Prussian arms.

An incident to which I did not at the moment attach its due importance opened my eyes to the underground work of Prussia in Protestant Alsace. We had scarcely reached Mulhausen, when my agent, a Crimean veteran, was apostrophized in a beer-shop by a knot of Baden Protestants. He made some light joke in reply to the remark of a Baden man, supposing that all the beer-drinkers about him would laugh on his side. Great was his amazement when he perceived that the Baden man had the whole gallery with him.

This man was an officer. He challenged my man. The latter would willingly have drawn his sword on the spot had not the duty on which he was employed forbidden it. An appointment was made for the next day. As we were to leave that evening for Altkirch and Ferrette my companion thought it useless to inform the officer's seconds that his position as a police officer forbade his accepting a challenge.

When he told me of this unlucky affair, he said he had noticed that this German had kept an eye on him from the two last stations before reaching Mulhausen, and that he seemed to have entered the beer-shop in search of him. I had myself observed the same thing; and I now thought it was high time to get away from

Mulhausen. For the first time, the words of the Alsatian clerk came back to me:

"May you never repent your zeal."

For the first time, also, since approaching the frontiers of Germany, the crime committed on a judge of the Imperial Court changed in aspect. I comprehended, after seeing the spirit of the population, that Jud might have been something else than a mere common murderer; namely, a spy of the Prussian Government. I was soon to be convinced of it.

We started from Mulhausen on horseback, and after riding some hours to reach the Ballons des Vosges, we were overtaken in a valley by the Baden officer and his seconds. They had evidently followed on our traces. It was growing dark. The three men fell upon us, and before we could defend ourselves, my agent was killed; the Baden man had run him through the heart with a sword, crying out:

"Coward! you are running away, and I kill you!"

At the same moment I was seized by the other two men, gagged, blindfolded, and dragged up the mountain. When they loosed me and unbound my eyes, and I recovered my senses, I found myself in a sort of hut or cabin occupied by several officers in Prussian uniform. They were sitting round a table on which lay maps of the country. One, who appeared to be chief of the party, resembled by his stiff, constrained manner a knight of the Middle Ages. He said to me with an obsequious, almost benevolent smile:

"Monsieur Claude, compose yourself. No harm will

be done to you. If your agent is dead, it is his own fault. He ought not to have wounded the national feelings of our former compatriots. Alsace has been German, and will be German again: be sure of that."

I tried to reply and protest. Then the officer changed in manner; he assumed that air of harsh command peculiar to Teutons when they have no need to coax an enemy.

"I have said enough, Monsieur Claude, to show you that you cannot continue your search. Your spies are spied upon. You know now what we do when they try their strength against ours. We should be sorry, however, as gentlemen, to treat you as we treated that fellow. Return to Paris. We know what you came to do at Ferrette; your scheme is useless. Jud is no longer there; he is in a foreign country. He is no longer Jud; he bears another name. Go! but I tell you this: if you continue your search, if, by sheer impossibility, you return safe and sound from Ferrette, you will be punished in Paris for your excess of zeal. The Emperor of the French himself will not be grateful for it. A magistrate like M. Poinsot died because he tried to penetrate state secrets. Jud killed him. Are you likely to be more fortunate? Now that you are free — reflect!"

I had no time to answer before the whole party disappeared, and I was alone. Amazed and dumbfounded by the strange things produced around me as if by a thunderbolt, I hastened to leave the hut. Still doubting what I had seen and heard, I ran down into the valley and called my agent; I could not yet believe that he

was dead. He was not there; even his body had disappeared. I have never known since what became of it.

I hastened, almost beside myself, my mind greatly troubled, to return to Mulhausen. There I found the city in a state of rejoicing contrasting painfully with the cruel drama just enacted before my eyes. I was told that General Moltke had arrived with his daughter on their way to the Vosges; and the *German* city of Mulhausen was joyful and festal, as the *French* and Catholic city had not ventured to be after our victories in Italy.

I understood it all. With anger and shame in my heart, I returned to Paris. I saw the Prefect, I saw the Imperial *Procurateur*, and I wrote at the bottom of my *procès-verbal* on Jud, the murderer of a French judge: "Nothing to be done!"

I shall explain, when I come to speak of the Tropmann case, what still remains mysterious in the murder of M. Poinsot, who died, like Kinck, for knowing too much about the underhand actions of Prussia, covetous of Alsace now that France possessed Savoy.

In spite of my ill-success in finding Jud, in spite of my disheartening return to Paris without the agent whom I had left murdered in the Vosges, this adventure had no bad consequences for me. When I told my Prefect the unexpected events of my terrible journey, I saw a man greatly embarrassed by my statement. He begged me to tell it to no one, to keep from the judges and the courts all knowledge of the mysterious and bloody affair.

This silence, which I was warned to keep "in my own

interest," produced a most painful impression upon me. I suffered in my professional dignity, and I suffered still more in my pride as a Frenchman. Alas! I began to see that our country and its sovereign were strong in appearance only, and that France was being made to pay for its return to despotism by subservience to foreign nations. For having, in memory of a glorious Napoleon, delivered herself over to a crooked nephew [*neveu retors*], France was now in the power of foreign despots more cruel and far more able than Napoleon III.

All things are paid for here below, sooner or later: Louis-Philippe, mounting the throne from a barricade, came down from it by a barricade; Napoleon I, born under English guns in Corsica, died chained by Englishmen to the rock of Saint Helena. If Napoleon III, borne by a crime to the Tuileries, on millions borrowed from the Bank of France and millions filched from a courtesan, was to be punished according to his deeds, what destiny was reserved for him — and for France?

Such were the reflections that I made to myself after Jud's murder of M. Poinsot — a murder about which no further inquiry was made. I recapitulated to myself the crimes of the Empire since the *Coup d'État*, — crimes which, for the most part, were the consequences of that action: the poisoning of Maréchal Saint-Arnaud; the death of Cornemuse; the murders of Kelch and the Prince de C——; the disappearance of Miss Howard; the hanging of Sinibaldi in Mazas; the drowning of Morelli at Bordeaux, etc.

The abduction and end of Miss Howard (so called), the handsome English woman who lent eight millions to Prince Louis Bonaparte to play the rôle of Pretender and to carry him from the Élysée to the Tuileries, proves how unsafe it was to trust to the security of imperial gratitude.

On the eve of his marriage Napoleon III was much embarassed by Miss Howard on account of this loan, and also because of the son whom Miss Howard had borne him. Moreover, she was taking upon herself the attitudes, alternately, of empress and tigress. Until the very eve of the marriage she refused to believe in Mademoiselle de Montijo's good luck, being convinced that the Emperor was only fooling her rival.

Mocquart, the Emperor's confidant, and the right hand of the Duc de Morny, encouraged her in this conviction, and the nearer the wedding-day came the more he deluded her. Mocquart, who, by the way, under the auspices of Mazzini, had been, with Dr. Conneau, chiefly instrumental in delivering Prince Louis from Ham, seeing that the only way to prevent the jealous English woman from making a public scandal on the day of the marriage was to remove her, persuaded her to go with him to Havre under a promise that the Emperor would join her there. While eating her breakfast on the day she expected the Emperor she read an account of the wedding ceremonies in the *Journal Officiel.* Instantly she left the Hôtel Frascati, obtained a locomotive, and rushed to Paris, where she was met by the spectacle of her house ransacked by the police.

Furniture, cushions, letters, papers, contracts, slashed, torn, mutilated, lay pell-mell upon the floor, while several of the latter were stolen, among them the Emperor's promissory note for the millions which he had borrowed from his mistress.

The Prefect, M. Pietri, warned from Havre by a dispatch from Mocquart of Miss Howard's arrival, reached, almost as soon as she did, her house in the rue du Cirque, which his agents had just finished rifling. He and his secretary heard with their own ears the vehement English woman call the Emperor "swindler! thief! murderer!"

The next morning, as soon as she woke, Miss Howard (whose real name was Elizabeth Faucit) was saluted by two men, one a banker, the other a general, with the title of Comtesse de Beauregard. Acting for the Duc de Morny, they presented her with the title-deeds of the Château de Beauregard, an estate lying close to Versailles. But this payment of her millions did not placate her. To defy the Empress she drove in the Bois in an open carriage with servants in the imperial livery; and for some time all Paris was diverted, at the races and on the avenues, by the presence of "the two Empresses."

This caper was costly to Miss Howard. She was abducted one night and taken to the frontier. Nothing more was ever heard of her. It was said, however, that she was smothered in her bed.[1]

[1] Her son by Louis Napoleon died at the Château de Beauregard in September, 1907.

Jules Favre had good reason to exclaim, as he did beside the body of M. Poinsot:

"It is not safe to stand well with the Château."

Long before the death of M. Poinsot, too close contact with the Tuileries had brought disaster to Maréchal Saint-Arnaud. Perhaps it is not useless to relate the events which preceded and brought about the death of that hero of the Crimea, whose end, according to the last words of that accomplice of the *Coup d'État*, "had no example in history."

Some little time before the Crimean War, Saint-Arnaud, who had felt no scruples when betraying the Duchesse de Berry, when robbing the Arabs, when putting in prison his chiefs who could have sent him to the galleys, Saint-Arnaud felt a tardy remorse when his new chiefs reproached him for his felonies, and especially when Napoleon showed himself no longer grateful for his services.

Saint-Arnaud then reminded his sovereign of a certain terrible little packet which the latter had given him on the eve of the *Coup d'État*, containing orders to burn Paris if Paris did not bow to the new Cæsar. The Emperor yielded before that threat, but only to await the hour when Saint-Arnaud, bold from impunity, should commit other peccadilloes that would compel the Emperor to punish him before the eyes of the Court.

The Maréchal did not keep him waiting very long. One morning he took from the Emperor's own room a purse full of bank-bills, which lay on the marble chimney-piece. His Majesty soon discovered the theft. Only

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three men had been in the room: Cornemuse, Saint-Arnaud, and the ex-King Jérome. The Emperor sent for the Prefect of Police, Pietri, who had lately succeeded Maupas before being himself replaced by Boitelle, after the affair of the Orsini bombs. To him the Emperor related the theft of which he was the victim.

"Who has been in the room, Majesty?" asked Pietri.

"Cornemuse," replied Napoleon.

"Hu! hu!" exclaimed Pietri, shaking his head doubtfully, and adding:

"Who else?"

"Jérome."

"Ho! ho!" said the Prefect in a sharper tone; "leave out Cornemuse — Well," he added, "anybody after King Jérome?"

"Saint-Arnaud."

"Ha! ha!" cried Pietri eagerly; "leave out King Jérome also; useless to look any further. Of course it is the Maréchal. My opinion is fixed. To convince your Majesty it is only necessary to confront Cornemuse and Saint-Arnaud — inasmuch as, out of respect for the Empire, we can't summon King Jérome."

No sooner said than done. Cornemuse and Saint-Arnaud defended themselves from the imputation in presence of the Emperor. From insults they passed to provocation, until they fought almost under the eyes of the sovereign, and General Cornemuse fell, mortally wounded.

When Napoleon talked of punishing the murderer,

Saint-Arnaud took to flight; but he went no farther than Antibes, whence he again threatened his master with the terrible packet containing the orders of December, written and signed "L. N. Bonaparte," enjoining him, in case of failure, to burn Paris [*incendier Paris*].

Saint-Arnaud returned from Antibes and resumed his portfolio as Minister of War. In it lay his death-warrant. He took it only to become, shortly after, commander-in-chief of the Army of the Crimea. He left France ill, consumed by an unknown malady — not unknown to him, nor to the man who had given him that death.

The gaoler of Blaye, the victor at the Alma, went to die as a hero, after living as an adventurer. Condemned by his accomplice, an adventurer like himself, he was purified by martyrdom.

CHAPTER XI

GAMBLERS AND GAMBLING-HOUSES

EVERYBODY amused him or herself under the Empire; princes and profligates, gamblers and wantons, they all joined hands to dance a dishevelled saraband, the first notes of which sounding in the highest society, descended thence, to be lost among the populace. Many of these people, of all ranks, lived solely by the product of vice and gambling. The police were often hard put to it in the clubs (which were really nothing else than gambling-hells disguised) to distinguish *grecs* [sharpers] from princes. Each day produced its scandal, which I was forced to hush up lest public opinion should become excited.

I possessed at that period — that is to say after the war in Italy, when a crowd of foreign "nobles" swooped down upon Paris — two inspectors with an infallible *flair* for the detection of sharpers and crimps. One was called "the Squirrel" [*l'Écureuil*]; the other "the Ventriloquist" [*le Ventriloque*]. The first was agile as a cat; the second artful as a monkey; both had a thousand and one tricks in their bag to foil the countless schemes and decoys by which the young fools of family were robbed.

The Squirrel knew all the clubs in Paris. Under the most varied characters and costumes he consorted every night with the high-priests of écarté, piquet, roulette, and baccarat. With marvellous agility worthy of Robert Houdin he could deal the right card, giving himself kings and aces in a way to make the Baron of Womspire jealous. He usually frequented the "authorized clubs"; that is to say, those gambling-houses which, under the direction of the Minister of the Interior, took the place during the Empire of the public gambling-houses, closed under Louis-Philippe.

The Squirrel was known to the managers of all these authorized clubs, who looked to him for help on certain great occasions when they desired to protect themselves against intruders whose play might compromise the reputation and even the existence of their clubs.

The Ventriloquist had no such fashionable connections. His specialty was to watch the clubs that were merely "tolerated" and held under the eye of the police. His power was less limited than that of his colleague, by reason of the class of houses he frequented. While the managers of the "authorized clubs" welcomed the Squirrel as a saviour, the directors of the "tolerated clubs" saw with alarm the entrance of the Ventriloquist. They knew that a report of that inspector as to certain illegal practices would close their establishment; so that the moment he appeared, they made haste to hide the contents of their *cagnotte* [osier money-box used by gamblers].

Where the Ventriloquist was chiefly feared was in

the secret and clandestine gambling-hells. Into those he would track a sharper by profession. When the game was well under way, the words: "thief" — "swindler," coming from his stomach, would resound through the room; then, in that moment of general stupefaction, my inspector would seize both stakes and keepers of the suspected establishment.

About the time of the expedition to Mexico, the Ventriloquist reported to the Prefecture the opening of a new gambling-house in the rue du Helder. It was kept by a foreign courtesan, a beautiful Spanish woman, now past her youth. Her former revenues failing her, she had created others out of her old clients; with the addition of sons of family, minors, and certain broken gamblers, whose pockets she filled with the money of the youths. The place was abandoned, not closed, after a very dramatic event in which the Ventriloquist figured. That inspector was, however, unable to bring the case before the courts, because of the influence possessed by the Spanish woman, who held princely strings, reaching even to the steps of the throne.

Both my gambling agents, the Squirrel and the Ventriloquist, had repeatedly reported to me the names of statesmen, high in office, who had been completely "cleaned out" by the rake of the beautiful Spaniard's croupiers. The Ventriloquist went often to the place to watch, especially, a certain Marquis d'Albano, an Italian, or Spanish nobleman, who was said to have made his fortune in the Mexican mines.

He played for high stakes in the rue du Helder. When he had no more bank-notes to throw on the green cloth, he laid down handfuls of precious stones with which his pockets were crammed in case of ill luck. It was said that these stones, spread out on the table, were to him so many fetiches, for it was rare that luck did not return to him as soon as he staked them in place of gold.

The Ventriloquist reported to me that the precious stones of the noble marquis were false. As soon as he staked them against his partner his swindling game began. At no cost would he have left those false stones, which proved him a rascal, in the hands of others. This so-called Marquis d'Albano, nicknamed the "sapphire man," on account of the sort of stone with which he was chiefly supplied, was, in reality, a sharper of the worst kind who, having been driven from foreign gambling-houses, had come to Paris to play a last desperate game. He was accompanied by a little old man with an ignoble face and a crafty manner who was called the Counsellor. Like the pretended marquis, he was a sharper *emeritus*.

The sapphire man won by the means adopted by all professional swindlers, namely, by "corner-bent" cards [*cartes biseautées*]. But the Counsellor had a far more original dodge by which he turned the luck to his accomplice. By the help of a tortoise-shell box very highly polished, which never left his hand, and which he rubbed and rubbed incessantly, he possessed a precious mirror. On the pretext of offering bonbons to

persons near him, he made the cover of the box reflect to his associate the cards of his opponent. He thus showed the former his proper play.

One night, when they were playing an outrageously "crooked" game in the rue du Helder, the Ventriloquist had quietly slipped into the room and stood watching the proceedings. The Marquis, a man of extreme elegance, in the prime of life and of dark complexion, was seated at a table opposite to a very young man. The latter was winning from the former, who presently, as his custom was, declaring he had no more gold, threw upon the table a handful of emeralds and sapphires, and asked for his revenge, which was instantly accepted. From that moment the luck turned in favour of the sharper. In twenty minutes he had robbed the youth of forty thousand francs, which he piled up in front of him among his false stones.

The young man, in his turn, asked for his revenge, staking the whole sum that he had lost — forty thousand francs. A crowd stood around the players. The Ventriloquist was in the front rank, never taking his eyes from the hands of the Marquis. He saw him slip from his sleeve a card and put it in the place of one he held. At the moment when the Marquis was in the act of doing this for the second time, the Ventriloquist sent these words sounding through the room from his stomach:

"Marquis, you are a thief!"

This unexpected cry, breaking the deep silence caused by the importance of the game, burst like a

bomb. The young man rose from the table, indignant, angry. The Marquis, who did not know whence the voice came, lost countenance. He rose abruptly, leaving *two* kings of hearts on the table.

Evidently one of the players was a swindler. A shout of indignation came from the crowd. The Ventriloquist, who, to save the young man, had caused this salutary diversion, was about to lay hands on the Marquis. Unfortunately, he reckoned without the Spanish woman and without the Counsellor. The latter, who had as much interest as the mistress of the house in saving his accomplice from being caught in a bad affair, put to profit the general confusion caused by the accusation that seemed to come from underground.

The young man, meantime, had sprung upon the Marquis, calling him a swindler and thief. During this altercation, the Counsellor, protected by the woman, profited by the moment when the chairs were noisily knocked over and the confusion was great to slip the marked cards from the sleeve of his accomplice into the pocket of the youth. This proceeding, however, the Ventriloquist did not see.

When the Marquis, saved by the Counsellor, demanded that both he and his opponent should be searched to show which of them was guilty, the Ventriloquist was as much aghast at the result as the young man himself, in whose pocket the marked cards were found.

Then followed a general hubbub. The young man thought he was the victim of some horrible nightmare.

As the money he had gambled was not his own, and as, in losing it, he, the faithless cashier of a bank, was already guilty, he did not hesitate, under the shock of this second accusation, to condemn himself. He left the room, seized his sword-cane, which was in the antechamber, and plunged it into his heart. Then, staggering back into the salon, he showed his bloody breast, exclaiming:

"Would a thief like that man" (pointing to the Marquis, who was in the act of gathering up his 80,000 francs) "die thus?"

He fell dead.

The Ventriloquist swore to avenge him; and he did so in the end, but not without difficulty. As for the place in the rue du Helder, this tragedy closed it. On an order from the Château to hush up the affair, its habitués deserted it. But I was much grieved myself to be unable to act. I was forced to content myself with giving strict orders that the Marquis d'Albano, the cause of the suicide, should not be lost sight of.

Since gambling-houses are no longer public, "authorized clubs" have become of considerable importance, and gambling-hells are too numerous to count. The licenses for gaming no longer enrich the public treasury; on the contrary, the city spends vast sums in watching both clubs and hells, and a special police against these houses is forever on the alert. But in spite of the activity of the police, the fever for play will open twenty gambling-houses for one that they close. Such places will never cease to exist. They were not

really closed in 1837, when, by a vote of the Chamber, they were declared illegal. Nor has the race of professional gamblers disappeared. Gambling may be suppressed by decree, but the passion for gambling cannot be suppressed. Man lives on chimeras. The gambler, who discounts nought but hope, is as eternal as humanity.

A gambler never admits that he loses. He has a horror of the word *loss*. He meets only with a "mischance." If, after several games, he has persistent ill luck, he says: "I 'm involved." When he is completely ruined, he resigns himself to watch the play of others and give them advice. Some regret that not a shred of their property is left to them, all being swallowed up in a *martingale* — a double or quits stake. They then propound to whoso will listen, their "practical studies," and their "infallible calculations on human probabilities."

The gambler is essentially a maniac, yet self-controlled. A well-known gambler at roulette in Baden never played for more than fifteen minutes; his stake was invariably the same; he either lost two thousand francs, or he won from fifteen to twenty thousand. The King of Bavaria always went to the Baden tables followed by a servant carrying a cash-box filled with gold. When the box was empty he left the place.

The gambler is superstitious; he believes in fetich. If a hump-backed man wins, you will see "punters" eagerly group about him to touch his hump and rub against his luck. At Vichy players carry rabbits' paws to gently touch the backs of those who win. One man

piles *louis* one upon another in a column. If the column keeps its equilibrium, he makes his stake. If it falls, he lays down his cards and puts his stake in his pocket, convinced in advance of his ill luck.

Suicide is never the end of the true gambler. A clerk who loses the money of his master, a speculator seeking to retrieve his fortune by gambling, may kill himself; the professional gambler, a maniac, never despairs of his luck, though he may have lost his last penny. He will stake his last shirt! If he has nothing more to lose, he will console himself in watching the play of others, and in giving advice. The professional gambler does not know what despair is. If he is ruined, it is because he has made a miscalculation. To his last day he hopes for retrieval. He is convinced he shall have it. He is a madman; but his madness is inherent in the human species. None but reasonable and reasoning men, players from ambition, from envy, or from necessity, ever give way to despair and commit suicide. The professional gambler lives to old age.

Thus it is that sharpers have a fine chance against the true gambler. On him they are able by their skill, their coolness, to bring to bear all the resources of their jugglery. For to him the game is sacred; he neither admits nor even suspects trickery.

CHAPTER XII

THIEVES AND FORGERS

IN the kingdom — or the republic — of the *Haute Pègre* the numerous ranks and categories have scarcely varied for the last thirty years. The *Haute Pègre* is, speaking generally, the caste, or association, of the oldest and most practised thieves; they commit none but great robberies, and hold in profound contempt all ordinary thieves, whom they call, derisively, *pégriots*, *chiffoniers* [rag-pickers].

Our society, overturned again and yet again as it has been by revolutions, sees in the caste of thieves the same thing that has happened in all other castes. There, as elsewhere, the more it changes, the more it is the same thing.

Systems of repression against wretches who have no other means of living than robbery and murder, being now discussed in the interests of *liberty ill understood*, thieves are becoming more numerous and more audacious. The world of thieves has put to profit the war against society to share the spoils and follow with impunity their criminal ends. During the last thirty years the number of murderers and robbers has frightfully

increased; while from day to day criminals are more and more able to escape from law and justice.

Thanks to greater rapidity and facility in ways of communication, the world of criminals is now a cosmopolitan world whose most distinguished heroes belong, as for thieves, to England; as for murderers, to Germany. The great genius of robbery was an Englishman named Benson; the prototypes of murder were Jud and Tropmann, both Germans.

Formerly, robbers *emeriti*, like Lacénaire and Soufflard, robbers and murderers both, established their "centres" in the slums of the Cité; now those "centres" are in foreign countries. These criminals form in London and in Germany not bands but associations, with their hierarchy, their rules, their troops, their finances, and their war-material. When a great event or some dangerous crisis occurs in France, — that happy land for swindlers, thieves, and murderers, — the international bandits send their most dangerous delegates to Paris. It may be said with all certainty that to-day [1881] the headquarters of our *Haute Pègre* are established in foreign countries; its small fry alone live in the lairs of Paris. The great men come over only when there is a "stroke to be made," or an event to exploit.

The *gens comme il faut*, the well-bred members of the *Haute Pègre*, keep themselves very carefully from their humbler brethren in the slums. When they need a "centre" in Paris to meet and concert their plans, they avoid all regions placed from time immemorial under the eye of the police. They create one for them-

selves. At the time of the Tropmann affair, an establishment, half-creamery, half-brewery, kept by a woman in spectacles, suddenly cropped up in the rue Grange-Batellière. It disappeared, with its hostess, the moment the police learned that Tropmann, on arriving in Paris, had gone there to meet a party of internationals. These heroes of the *Haute Pègre* never do more than two "strokes" a year; but those are always master-strokes which procure them a fortune.

Politics, at which these geniuses of robbery and murder scoff, are to them a means, never an end. Under the Commune, when fanatics and dreamers of absolute equality opened all the prisons of Paris, the thieves and murderers took advantage of that act of social reparation to plant themselves in the Hôtel de Ville and dictate their own laws. They had but one object—to profit by the national disaster and to pillage, continuing their exploits even upon the men who had released them! I, myself, when a prisoner under the Commune, owed my life and my escape from the fate of the hostages put to death by Ferré and Raoul Rigault to a man of the *Haute Pègre*, then in power, who recognized me gratefully, and saved me, by his cleverness, from certain death.

For the last thirty years the leaders of this world of criminals have acquired an importance that places them almost in the rank of conquerors. Though the police, thanks to its spies, detectives, and inspectors, knows the name, address, and character of all the scoundrels in Paris, it does not know, and will never know, the

bandits in other lands who descend upon us from their lairs and set in motion their armies. These wretches have the whole world in which to escape the pursuit of our sleuth-hounds. They have gold in abundance with which they pay a police almost as well organized as our own. For the last twenty years they have *internationalized* themselves.

Before the war in Italy, and long before the German war, the criminal quarters of Paris — the *Isle aux Singes* at Gréville, the *Carrières d'Amérique* at Belleville — knew no other cosmopolitan robbers than the *Romanichels*, a sort of nomad tribe, dating back to the Middle Ages, recalling the family of the *Cageux*, classical bohemians, thieves, robbers, and murderers from father to son, travelling in all countries, recognizing no laws, having but one object, theft, one counsellor, craft, one will, that of the tribe. To-day, the *Romanichel* bohemians are far surpassed by the organization of other bands, the depredations of which, since the Italian and German wars and the era of the Commune, present a much more threatening attitude, excited by our civil discords, and encouraged by our political rancours.

While the great crimes are still plotted and carried out by instigators in foreign lands, a change has taken place in the *pégriot*. Thanks to the relaxed laws that protect him, he has become a past-master of theft and allied crimes. Quite recently we have seen the too celebrated Maillot organizing bands of *pégriots* on the road from Gréville to Vaugirard, and murdering for the sole purpose of robbery. They exceed in cruelty and

cynicism the old *fagot* [discharged galley-slave], to whom, in earlier times, they would have been mere aides.

In addition to this foreign contingent of robbers and assassins (but aside from these apprentice thieves, now past-masters in crime and infamy), the tricks, the expedients of modern bandits vary very little from those described by Vidocq and Canler. It really seems as though crime, like all other things here below, by spreading and generalizing itself, has lost originality.

On the other hand, swindlers and forgers, whose numbers are legion, show far more imagination. They do not borrow from Mandrin or Cartouche their expedients and dodges. No, they avail themselves of progress, they meet the conditions of the present day. The police are fairly worn out at times with these rascals. They swarm in Paris; they fight a perpetual battle with us under one form or another: sometimes it is a "matrimonial agency" that we have to watch, the advertisements of which attract respectable families anxious to hide the fault of a daughter by paying a handsome *dot* to whoever will marry her. Sometimes it is a "business agency," a "commission house," offering employment to poor devils, who, in view of a position and a fixed salary, are induced to put their savings, which they never will see again, into the hands of swindlers. Or, again, it is a midwife, making a business of abortion, calling herself a *mère aux anges* [mother to angels] of deserted children.

The swindlers and forgers who are least easy to capture are the adulterators of articles of commerce, and

those who alter and falsify the receipts of the pawn-shops. A band of rascals was organized for this double purpose. In less than three months they succeeded in making 300,000 francs, and in three months more they had realized a round million.

In the suburbs of Paris, such, for instance, as the streets named Ménilmontant and Flanders, there are workshops of the forgers of commemorative coins, and of medals claiming to have been blessed, which are sent by the wagon-load to far distant foreign lands under pretext of religious propaganda. The forgers of these coins and medals unlicensed by the Mint produce wonderful transformations by means of electric baths. A zinc medal becomes a gold medal, and is sold as such, with a benediction from the Pope that has never been given. Several of these clandestine workshops have been broken up by the police; though often our hands were tied by high influences that protected these manufacturers, who were, most of them, church-wardens of a parish.

The most interesting forgers, those who have raised their misdeeds to an art, are the makers of bank-notes and autographs. Does the reader desire to know the sum represented by the forged notes that are brought to the Bank of France in one year? It amounts, in round numbers, to two millions of francs. Lacénaire, whose business was that of a public writer, was a forger of the highest class; he could imitate perfectly the writing of the great bankers and merchants of his day.

Since Lacénaire, a new industry has cropped up, which I ought to have detected and arrested at its start, but

failed in doing so, — I mean the fabrication of autographs.

There existed some time ago, near the Place Saint-Sulpice, a dealer in second-hand articles, who sold at a reduction letters and signatures of the greatest people in the world — Frederick the Great, Voltaire, J. J. Rousseau, Mme. de Warens, Louis XIV, George Sand, and Sandeau, Bernadotte, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, etc., etc. The shop of this man was a perfect Pantheon; an historical pandemonium, where the quantity of famous names equalled their quality.

Being myself a lover of curious things, I often stopped as I passed through that quarter before the show-window of the dealer, whose sordid shop scarcely corresponded with the calligraphic treasures he exhibited to the public eye. Yet I must own that on entering it and meeting the little old man, with grey eyes, pinched face, and sunken cheeks, yellow as his own parchments, I, even I, was entrapped.

Was the man a maniac, ruining himself by collecting autographs that he sold, as he told me, with regret. Or was he — could he be, on the contrary, a shrewd knave, who, to profit by the mania of collectors, made himself more of a collector than they?

I own that I could not make this out; and I stood looking about me when, at the farther end of the shop, where Louis XIV clocks were piled pell-mell with Louis XV andirons and rococo porcelains, my eye caught sight of a beautiful picture marked "authentic portrait of La Fontaine," and also of a sketch for a portrait

which I recognized at once as that of George Sand about her twentieth year.

"I possess," said the little old man, pointing to the sketch, "a portrait of George Sand before she was the celebrated writer that we now know, and when she was only a painter on china, after her first separation from M. Dudevant."

As I warmly admired the breadth and freedom of the sketch, the old man added:

"This portrait is all the more precious because I have reason to think that she painted it herself."

I was surprised at this detail, and so much interested in the matter that I forgot the object of my inspection. I was being caught in the lime with which I had expected to catch the bird in his own nest; and I was completely fooled when the old man opened a casket and drew forth several letters from George Sand to Sandeau, in one of which the celebrated writer called her master in the art of writing: "Illustrious Flambard!" Sandeau called *Flambard* [Flashlight] by the woman who owed to him the grace of her style, and half her name! Here was something to dream about! How could I doubt the authenticity of the letter when its owner undoubtedly possessed a portrait of the author.

I own that, in spite of certain suspicions which lingered in my mind, I should have been wholly taken in if it had not been for the profusion of the old fellow's merchandise. Returning to him the sketch and the autograph, I asked, in a tone of incredulity, who supplied him with his more or less authentic collection.

"A learned man, monsieur," he replied, looking at me with an air of lofty disdain, "a very learned man, whose good faith cannot be suspected, for he is honoured with the confidence of the Institute. His name is Vrain Lucas, the friend and scientific assistant of Michel Chasles."

And the old man, closing his coffer and replacing the sketch, showed me out of his shop without another word.

I own I was puzzled, floored, and beaten. How could I suspect an old antiquary who obtained his treasures from a man honoured by the confidence of Michel Chasles, the dean of the most distinguished philosophers and mathematicians then living. What could I, an outsider, a mere policeman, do against Vrain Lucas, behind whom the antiquary sheltered himself, supported by the learned Academy of which Chasles was at that time the most superb incarnation?

It was not until later, very much later, that Vrain Lucas was discovered to be a shameless and vulgar forger; who had abused the confidence of the learned mathematician, and had used him as a breast-plate to launch his forged letters and signatures of Pascal, Voltaire, Newton, etc., etc., upon the world. At first M. Chasles, when the forgeries were discovered, was placed in an awkward position. When summoned before the examining magistrate as the accomplice of Lucas, of whom he was really the victim, he replied to the judge:

"I have often been duped, never suspecting evil in others."

I myself, after the Commune, had a personal opportunity to judge of the skill of the forgers of autographs. An offer was made to one of my friends in my presence of an autograph of the famous Raoul Rigault, who, with Ferré, had imprisoned me as a hostage in the prison of La Santé. The man who offered the autograph did not know me; he knew only that my friend was a fanatical collector.

When the document was produced, what did I see? — a forged autograph of which the original was then in my desk and is still in my possession! an order to permit my wife to see me in the prison of La Santé, in presence of a gaoler, signed Raoul Rigault! This paper I had shown to many persons after the Commune had ceased to exist; it had remained deeply engraved on the memory of one of them whom we soon discovered to be an autograph forger.

When the Commissary of Police made a descent on this successor to Vrain Lucas, he found a secret workshop where several forgers were busy, according to their aptitudes, in *making* the writing of Alexandre Dumas, La Place, Alfred de Musset, Champfleury, etc. One of them excelled in the large writing of Louis XIV, another in the clear, precise calligraphy of Dumas, *père;* a third in the illegible scrawl of Balzac.

There was also, in the same house, a studio in which a painter made admirable portraits of great men in the precise style of the artists of the eighteenth century. The master of the establishment sold these portraits as originals to antiquaries of the same honest class as the

owner of the portrait of George Sand! At last I had the key to the mystery of that sketch!

These rascally forgers of antiquities are not dead yet. Our historical museums are filled with the work of these skilful artists, whose lies, carefully preserved, are going down to posterity.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DIAMONDS OF THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK

THOSE who knew Paris in the sixties, will doubtless remember, in the old Beaujon quarter, a strange, striped house, the aspect of which had an irritating originality. The outer walls of the property opened, or rather, were never opened, into gardens, in one angle of which stood the building owned and occupied by the Duke of Brunswick.

The illustrious Duke, whose very noble stock has given kings to England, was not less eccentric than the appearance of his house. If the style paints the man, it could be said with equal truth that the Duke of Brunswick was painted by his house. He was a personage as mysterious, as bedizened, as sinister as the scarlet façade of his singular habitation. In that house, which resembled an immense strong-box, the Duke kept from fifteen to sixteen millions worth of diamonds. He was as miserly as he was rich, while continuing his ancestral traditions of gallantry. If he took his pleasures, he wanted them cheap. He never opened his jewel-box, which was stuffed as full of precious

stones as the cave of Ali-Baba, except for his personal and private satisfaction.

Perhaps he was right, that noble Duke, to entrench himself in his house, as in a cave or fortress. His family never forgave the trick by which, when driven from his duchy, he contrived to carry off the diamond millions that belonged far more to the crown than to him, the discrowned prince. It was not without reason, therefore, that the Duke had made his house a sort of scarecrow; like the Chinamen who, to terrify their adversaries, hide behind fantastic monsters.

But the repulsive outside appearance of the house was not its only means of defence. Before reaching the Duke's apartments a thousand bells would be set ringing. There were bells to all the doors, and these doors converged towards the private study and bedroom of the Duke. Behind these two rooms was the strong-box or cupboard which contained the diamonds. Here electric bells communicated by hidden wires with a row of pistols. At an unaccustomed pressure these revolvers could fire a broadside that would inevitably blow to fragments the rash intruder. If the Duke slept on millions it was certainly not a bed of roses; and it is no wonder that he, mentally as well as bodily, saw everything blood-coloured.

I remember this singular personage as I often saw him in a stage-box of the lesser theatres, which he frequented in company with some ephemeral mistress of the quarter-world. He sat immoveable as a milestone. It was impossible to guess his age or his features be-

hind the painted mask of his impassible face. All was false in this enigmatical individual, who was almost an automaton. False was his beard, false his hair, false his whiskers; even his movements, when he made any, went, as it were, by mechanism. When he rose, a strange, rattling sound was heard, like the clatter of bones when the wind sets a skeleton in motion. This man, a living corpse, a talking skeleton, was horrible to look at.

The Emperor himself did not give more trouble to the police. Inspectors were paid never to lose sight of him, and to watch his domestics, whom he distrusted as the *rois fainéants* distrusted the mayors of their palace. We had to keep an incessant eye on this dead body, which lived only to aggravate his family. The police were literally worn out because the noble Duke, who had alienated all persons of his own caste, was the aim and object of every intriguer upon earth, both male and female, attracted by the gleam of his diamonds. As miserly as he was suspicious, his monomania (often quite justifiable) was to think that the whole human race was after his jewel-box.

The newspapers of that period are full of suits brought by obscure persons against the luckless rich man, who was always on the *qui vive*, always in expectation that some one would shout to him "Your money or your life." Once a Mme. Civry drew upon him and claimed, as a natural daughter, a very considerable allowance. It was really no wonder that, fantastic as he was, he took such precautions to defend himself

against his assailants. If his house was a fortress, if his garden was full of wolf-traps, if his private rooms were defended by revolvers and electric bells, it was because his house and his person were literally hemmed about by all the bandits of the globe.

The Duke had in his service a young English woman as honest and virtuous as she was pretty. He turned her away because he could not obtain from her what he obtained from his other servants, compliances that were not in the bond of ordinary service. The maid, angry at the insolence and the stinginess of her master, who had turned her off without her legal eight days' notice, vowed vengeance. She found an avenger at hand in the Duke's confidential valet, who declared himself outraged by the conduct of the Duke; he had, he said, wrongs of his own to redress, and he proposed to the maid to take their revenge in common. She consented.

This valet, named Henry Shaw, was a countryman of the young girl. He was born at Newcastle and was twenty-six years of age. He had not lived a year with the Duke of Brunswick before, by his intelligence, his manners, his obliging ways, he had made himself the indispensable man of the household. The following was the plan of revenge he proposed to the maid: they were to write a joint letter addressed to the Duke of Cumberland, in which they pledged themselves, in return for a sum of one hundred thousand francs, to restore to the family of the Duke of Brunswick the diamonds of which he had defrauded them.

The maid consented, not without reluctance, to sign this letter with the valet; but she added a postscript in which she declined her share in the reward claimed by Shaw, who, she said, took upon himself alone, by means of which she knew nothing, to restore the diamonds to their rightful owners, from whom the Duke was keeping them.

His plan thus laid, Shaw went to work to obtain the diamonds, the real object of his entering the Duke's service. Clever robber that he was, he had not only studied his master in order to curry favour with him, but he had likewise studied the strong-box and its arsenal, and was ever on the watch for some chance moment when he might evade the threatening difficulties and open it.

This strong-box, or coffer, was built into the wall of the bedroom adjoining the Duke's study, and placed close to the head of his bed. Its iron door was defended, as I have said, by a battery of revolvers; and outside of this door was a wooden door, concealed by the padded silken hangings that covered the walls of the room. It was impossible for any hand ignorant of the secret which closed and defended this receptacle to open it when once the owner had closed the iron door.

Now, on the 7th of December, 1863, the Duke was expecting his jeweller to take orders for the setting of certain stones which he had taken from the coffer. In doing so, he neglected, contrary to his usual habit, to lock the inner iron door. Shaw, who had entered

the Duke's service expressly to watch for such a moment of forgetfulness, saw with joy that the Duke by not locking the door left the complicated mechanism of the pistol-battery unset. The Duke then locked the outer door, the key of which never left his person.

After waiting in vain for his jeweller, the Duke went out, leaving a message for the man, if he came, with Shaw, who had his entire confidence. Left alone, Shaw seized the opportunity he had long waited and prepared for. Using a file, which he always carried, he forced the lock of the outer door, and then pulled open the iron door which had lost its power to fire the battery on the robber.

Before the latter, on the shelves, in the drawers, lay the treasure of his master, — diamonds, jewels, decorations, bags of gold, — a treasure amounting to over fifteen millions. Shaw filled his pockets and a linen bag which he always carried with him. Then he closed the door behind the silk hanging which hid the breakage, and went to his room to pack his bag and depart. He went to the railway station and took his ticket for Boulogne, taking care to leave word for the Duke, with one of the men-servants, that he was unwell and unable to attend him that evening.

When the Duke returned and received the message, he became suspicious. Rushing to the wooden door masking the coffer, he found the lock forced. No longer a doubt! he was robbed! Opening the iron door, he found that over two millions in diamonds and quantities of bank-notes were taken. The valet's room was

searched; its condition revealed the guilty man. On the floor lay several diamonds, dropped in his hasty flight.

Complaint was instantly made to the Prefecture. As complaints of this character made by such personages usually reached me as soon as they were sent in, I received an order to attend to the case immediately. On this occasion, the London police, by communicating with the French police, made my work easy.

I have already said that Shaw, shrewd robber that he was, had tried to enlist the interests and gratitude of the Duke's family, and thus give to his crime a certain chivalrous appearance. That which he hoped to save him proved his undoing. His letter to the English Prince of the blood roused the latter's indignation; and, to prevent it from becoming a pretext for scandal, he sent it to the London police, who, in turn, forwarded the information to the Prefecture in Paris. As chief of police, I received the communication almost as soon as I had taken the Duke of Brunswick's deposition.

I repeat: Shaw's excess of precaution defeated him. He had added, like the chambermaid, a postscript to his letter in which he said he would wait until a certain time at Boulogne the arrival of an emissary from the Prince authorized to receive the diamonds of the Duke of Brunswick; for which service he claimed for himself the sum of one hundred thousand francs. Thus I was notified of the robbery and of the direction in which the robber had fled almost simultaneously.

I took a night train and arrived at Boulogne by day-

break. Knowing by experience the habits of thieves of the Shaw species, I sent the two inspectors I had brought with me to the best hotels in the city. From them I soon learned that Shaw (whose photograph I had in my pocket) was at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Thither I proceeded and asked to see him.

When we met I presented to him his letter to the Duke of Cumberland and said I was sent to meet him. He looked discomfited, but was still more so when my two agents joined me, and I showed warrant for his arrest. Whether he would or not, he was forced to return with me by railroad, leaving the Folkestone steamer to depart without him, and without the diamonds.

Henry Shaw was, in reality, a professional thief. English by birth, he had lived in Prussia, Poland, and England, changing his name as often as his residence. He had committed a robbery in Warsaw on one of his own uncles, and he came to Paris in 1862 for the express purpose of robbing the Duke of Brunswick. He was then twenty-six years of age, and the type of a class of thieves called "interesting": thieves without shame, uniting skill and cunning with audacity. He was a tall, thin, slender young man, always irreproachably well-dressed. His skin was pallid, his cheeks hollow and bony, while his large prominent eyes on that glaucous face had a roguish expression mingled with irony.

When he was brought before the court of assizes, the Duke of Brunswick, who knew of his letter to the Duke of Cumberland, did not appear as witness. He was

afraid of the scandal and pretended to be ill. Having recovered his diamonds, he would make no charge against Shaw except in a vague way through an aide-de-camp. The judge, more enlightened than the jury, said to the prisoner:

"Shaw, explain your case; for the jury do not know why you are here."

"Well, then, they should acquit me," he replied imperturbably.

"Do not aggravate your situation by misplaced jokes," said the judge.

"I am not joking," he replied; "if I am not condemned, I request to be allowed to go."

"Answer," ordered the judge.

"I have nothing to answer, inasmuch as my accuser dares not accuse me."

"He cannot," said the judge.

"Because he has nothing to say."

The rest of the examination was on the same tone. When the judge asked him about the hundred thousand francs he had contrived to secrete, Shaw replied:

"Probably I dropped them in the young woman's room, and did not pick them up."

"Why not?" asked the judge.

"I had enough. However," he added, "if you will assure me that the girl will not be harassed about those hundred thousand francs, I will tell you who she is."

"Your request is inadmissible."

"I am not the judge of that," replied Shaw, bowing ironically.

"But I am!" retorted the judge, ending the scene amid an hilarity that was very unusual in that court.

But the celebrated lawyer, Lachaud, gave another turn to the trial, which, so far, had been as burlesque as the strange personage in whose behalf it was brought. If the judge could not make the thief talk, still less could he silence Maître Lachaud, who threatened to say too much.

"The Duke of Brunswick," he cried, "instead of coming here, sends an aide-de-camp. My client holds his tongue. I fully expected it —"

"You, yourself," interrupted the judge, "talk far too much in pretending you have nothing to say."

"The silence of the accused," replied his defender, "is based on considerations that you understand very well — considerations that permit you to be more merciful than the Minister of the Interior expects."

The thief, however, was condemned to twenty years at the galleys; but he kept his hundred thousand francs, which could not go to the Duke, inasmuch as the Duke never claimed them out of fear of Maître Lachaud's tongue, which said too much while pretending to say nothing. At the conclusion of the trial it was hard to say which of the parties was most to be commiserated, — the thief who had made a hundred thousand francs, or his master who fled from a court where he feared revelations. "Stolen goods bring no profit," says the proverb.

The diamonds of His Royal Highness, filched from the national treasury where they belonged, went to enrich a republic that did not know what to do with them. It needed a Duke of Brunswick, who painted his house bright red and trusted a thief, to make Switzerland the heir of what belonged to Hanover.

CHAPTER XIV

ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH M. THIERS

I HAVE had the satisfaction in my long career to have never mingled in any unworthy machinations in spite of the times in which I lived; to have never served either the cupidity or the base purposes of the courtiers of the Empire, too ready to embitter still further the rancours of their master. I will prove this by the following episode:

One day, in 1863, I met Mme. X——, elegantly dressed, on the boulevard. She was on the arm of a dandy of the finest variety, — waxed moustache and lemon-coloured gloves. She came up to me with her usual dragoon *aplomb*, and without giving her brilliant escort the time to bow to me, she dropped his arm and dismissed him with a lack of civility that amazed me. He sneaked off, like a cur with his tail between his legs. I felt pained and mortified for him, and I asked:

"Who is that gentleman? and why do you send him off in such a way?"

"*That!*" she said, with a contemptuous grimace; "oh that's a species one cannot keep too carefully at a distance lest he encroach too far. That's my secretary, my factotum, my servant, a little of a spy, a little of a literary

man, a little of everything! In reality, he 's nothing at all! The thing eats, drinks, talks, poses, but scratch off the varnish on that semblance of a man, and you have a manikin, a lay figure. He thinks he is somebody because I dress him and lodge him. For me, he is a servant, good at *doing anything*."

Disgusted with her cynicism I asked:

"Was it to show me a gentleman of that species that you stopped me?"

"No," she answered, taking my arm and dropping her voice; "it was to give you an order from the Château."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, pinching my lips.

"To-morrow — to-night," she added, "you will go and see M. Thiers."

"*I* go and see M. Thiers!" I exclaimed. "*I!* on the terms he is with the Château? Nonsense!"

"I tell you you will go to see M. Thiers, for within an hour he has left a card, *turned down*, at your door."

"Then you know more than I do," I said; "I have not been home since morning."

"How stupid you are!" she laughed, pressing coquettishly on my arm. "Is n't it our business to know what other people do not know?"

"True. But how do you know that M. Thiers called in person at my house?"

"By that manikin you have just seen. This morning he saw M. Thiers in the street. As he was idling about, waiting for me, he followed him. He saw him enter your house. Naturally, as I pay him to report everything, he told me what I have just told you. Now you know what

you have to do *in our service* if you do not wish to be counted among our enemies as the confederate of that old parliamentarian, that dangerous veteran, the Emperor's enemy. Good-day to you, my dear Claude — a man warned is twice a man."

And with that she left me, planted on the sidewalk, amazed by what I had heard.

At this period, the elections of 1863 opened the doors of the Chamber of Deputies to M. Thiers and others who, in December, 1851, had issued from them to go to Mazas. Force had driven them from their seats; the law re-seated them. Parliamentarianism was being re-constituted. The France of law, which had slept for a dozen years, was awaking; she opened her eyes, roused by the Mexican war — as evil a dream as the *Coup d'État.* Coming to her senses once more, she voted for Thiers.

And M. Thiers, who, on returning, remembered me because he had need of me, had, as Mme. X—— asserted, left his card on me the moment he resumed his seat in the Chamber. On receiving it, I hastened to pay him a visit at his house in the rue Saint-Georges.

As soon as he saw me, he took me into his private room, with the greatest mystery.

" My dear Claude," he said with diabolical animation, pressing my hand effusively, " during the last twelve years I have not forgotten what I owe you for warning me that I was about to be arrested by the myrmidons of Bonaparte. As long as I could do nothing for you I kept silence. But now that we are strong through the weakness and blunders of our conquerors, strong by the

LOUIS ADOLPHE THIERS

ruins they have made around them, *now* I come to you, and say: Be one of us! You arrested me as an insurgent, an anarchist; now that the principle of national sovereignty, that great principle of Liberty, brings me back face to face with your sovereign to remind him of the laws he violated, the oaths he betrayed, I say to you, — in your interests, — in mine, — in those of France, — I say to you, my dear Claude, be one of us!"

"Monsieur Thiers," I replied, rising and taking my hat, "if you have a memory, so have I. I remember that formerly you told me to do my duty, nothing but my duty. If I listened to you, if I rallied to you, I should be a dishonest man. I serve my sovereign, as you told me to do, loyally. Be our sovereign to-morrow, and the humble policeman, if you think me worthy, will have the honour of serving you as faithfully."

"Ah!" exclaimed M. Thiers, excitedly, not expecting this reply; "so you are enslaved to this Empire, *you!*"

"No, Monsieur Thiers," I answered, bowing to him, "because, when I leave this room I shall forget, for your sake and for mine, this conversation."

"Well, well," said M. Thiers, pursing his lips and settling his spectacles, "you have remained an honest man, for which I congratulate you. But take care! too much self-abnegation does harm. You have too much of it ever to succeed. — Well, I had a great many things to say to you; but there's no use saying them now. Or rather, I will say them later."

"When you have your ministers, my chiefs, at the coming revolution!"

"And it *is* coming, my dear Claude; coming without delay!" exclaimed Thiers, a diabolical smile twisting his elfish old face.

I left him. When I returned to my private room at the Prefecture, whom should I find installed there but Mme. X——, lying comfortably on my sofa, and smoking a cigarette.

"Well!" she demanded the moment she saw me, "what did that old baboon of a Thiers, that bourgeois behind the age, propose to you?"

"Nothing," I said curtly, "because," I added, not to incur the wrath of the irascible spy, "because I let him know at once that I am not a politician, but a simple police officer."

"You lie!" she exclaimed. "If any one else had made me that reply I'd have him *broke*. But you, my friend, to whom I owe my life, I spare you. I leave you to your secrets with that obstinate and out-of-date old Orléanist. Good-bye! I tell you that in listening to Thiers and his rubbish, you are a ninny."

So saying, out she went, much provoked, slamming the door behind her.

To this had we come under the Empire! Neither friends nor enemies of that power could admit, so obliterated was all moral sense, that a man might listen to some other counsel than that inspired by self-interest or by hatred!

It was my acquaintance with M. Thiers that first brought me into the society of men of letters, which, since then, I have always sought. Their existence, *on*

the outside, has been to me a relaxation from my concentrated life, which, at certain points, is not unlike that of writers and artists. A good policeman, while ever on his guard against passions, in order to be cool in analyzing effects, is none the less inquisitive and inquiring. What a subject of study for a policeman is the profession of an artist or a man of letters, called upon to reproduce all the follies of the human race.

Our rôle, however, is far less enviable than that of the artist or writer; for the policeman is required to mingle in a thousand dramas that the artist only analyzes to enjoy. This affinity between the two vocations exhibits itself in very different ways: the one by skill and dexterity joined to activity; the other by the most complete carelessness and the greatest naïveté. Perhaps it is for this reason that I have always sought — I, the man of duty, the slave of my vocation — the men who affect disdain for social conditions and the ordinary rules of life. The tone, the spirit of the lettered and artistic race refreshed me delightfully; its naïveté amazed me; it did me good, when I escaped from the centres of crime and the hell of corruption and duplicity.

From 1848 to 1858 I was in charge of the police supervision of the theatres: and I assert that I have seen defile before me, not only the most celebrated artists and men of letters, but also the most famous political comedians of our times.

I have seen, after the events of June, 1848, — I have seen with my own eyes Prince Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, at that very time aspiring to the imperial purple,

appear in the box of a theatre with his face and hands dirty, to curry favour with the sovereign people in the gallery.

I have seen Victor Hugo, standing on one foot, refuse a stool offered to him from below by the malicious Béranger, that he might continue the cynosure of all the eyes of the adoring crowd that acclaimed him from the gallery.

I have seen Rachel, the greatest tragedienne of modern times, who had had for her Mæcenases the courtiers of the most liberal of monarchies, sing the "Marseillaise" before the footlights, and then drive off in the carriage of the Cæsars to the imperial palace.

I have seen a little author, who could not pay for his glass of beer at the Café des Mousquetaires, faint away on hearing a fusillade on the Boulevard des Capucines, and sign, three days later, as secretary of the Provisional Government, the proclamation announcing to the French nation the appointment of its new sovereigns.

I have seen strolling players of the lowest class, on the eve of 1848, become on the morrow officers of the body-guard of Caussidière.

I have seen actresses, having sung upon the stage the "Girondins" and the "Chant du Départ," jump into the coupés of the Empire which were, invariably, stationed from eleven o'clock till midnight at the side doors of the minor theatres.

I have seen the wife of a member of the Provisional Government who, the night before, could not pay her

coal-man, drive to the theatre in one of the carriages of the ex-king, taking the precaution to stop on the way and proudly pay that coal-bill.

What have I not seen? All that human folly can produce, down to Lucien de la Hode, acclaimed, on the morrow of 1848, by an enthusiastic crowd at the theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin, before he was condemned to death by his comrades whom he had again and again sold to the police.

Such follies have since been enacted in a way that was equally grotesque, though never in so bloody a manner as under the Commune. Where will they stop when the tide of revolution again casts upon us the heel-taps of our society in ruins? — But these retrospective, or perspective, digressions are carrying me too far, and they are out of my proper province.

After the events of 1848, when I became commissary of the theatres, I installed myself, far from my office, in the rue Notre Dame de Lorette. I entered again into the merry, witty, heedless life of the artistic and literary bohemia grouped around me; the scenes of which, always varied, were renewed like a fascinating panorama to my astonished eyes. I thus passed many agreeable moments with persons who made me forget in their imaginary world the horrible or repugnant dramas I was forced to follow in real life.

It must be said that true artists, true writers, have ways of looking at things that belong to them alone. They even astound and stupefy the policeman, accustomed to live among scoundrels almost as strong as

himself in dealing with justice and the law. Therefore, with some exceptions, theatrical people and men of letters are the last persons to become the objects of a criminal prosecution. Their levity, their want of logic, their inconsistency, are all so many safeguards against themselves.

For one Scribe, who never trusted anything to chance, — for one Hugo, who, like Scribe, but in a higher way, never trifled with fortune, — you will find a hundred Gringoires, and quite as many Alexandre Dumas, seniors. Inconstancy and levity, — those are the birthmarks of talent, the characteristics of genius.

I can still see Alexandre Dumas, the elder, that great child, with a mulatto face, smiling and sympathetic, as he entered his Théâtre historique on the evening before his bankruptcy, and asked his box-keeper:

"How much are the receipts?"

"Two hundred francs," replied the man; "but the gas company refuse to supply us, and here are six hundred francs in protested notes."

"Pooh! we 'll take the two hundred," said Dumas. "It will be daylight to-morrow! Before the bailiffs get here, let us go and drink a punch out of that money."

I had, myself, to act against Alexandre Dumas, who never had time to add up a sum; he was always too busy writing pages to supply the deficit of his subtractions. It was under the following circumstances:

After the bankruptcy of his theatre, Dumas was so oblivious of law that he still wore the cross of the Legion of Honour. The police did not wish to proceed against

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

a man of such value and importance as if he were an ordinary misdemeanant, and I was instructed by the court to ask Alexandre Dumas, a bankrupt, not to wear the decoration.

I presented myself to the illustrious writer. I explained to him the unpleasant errand on which I was sent. I begged him not to expose himself to remark, but to submit to the law by depriving his buttonhole of its red ribbon, inasmuch as he was temporarily marked off the roll of the Legion of Honour.

"Very well, Papa Claude," said the big child, wagging his head and shrugging his shoulders in a way he had. "We 'll conform to the law."

Then, pulling out a drawer beneath his desk (on which lay sheets of paper covered with his large and magnificent writing), this colossus of the *feuilleton* showed me a collection of the crosses of every order upon earth, saying, with his broad smile:

"What will you give for all that hardware?"

I was about to withdraw, grieved and ashamed for this wonderful writer, whose merits had been so gloriously recognized and rewarded by all the Courts of Europe, when a witness of the scene, a monarchist, sulky with the Republic, said to him:

"It is under a Republic that you are treated in this way. Why the devil, my dear Dumas, are you, an intelligent man, a Republican?"

"Only to be fifteen days in advance of you," he replied, as he showed me out, anxious to be done with me and the visitor, that he might finish his "copy,"

the only thing that he, who forgot everything, never forgot.

Men of letters are great children. Thoughtless about the things of life, they are not changed since the days of La Fontaine. Artists, men of letters, theatrical men, painters, musicians, are the most artless creatures in the world. The faithless cashiers who discount their weaknesses and defraud their enterprises prove it. The Society of Musical Composers and Editors was defrauded by its founder of 40,000 francs. The Society of Dramatic Authors had a bank drama, in which its founder, M. Scribe, saved the situation by something more than a comic dodge. The Society of Men of Letters had to send one of its light-hearted cashiers to Mazas. Without Nadar, the great and generous Nadar, who remembered that in his own bohemian days that cashier, more careless than dishonest, had helped him,—without Nadar the man would have gone to prison for years. He pulled him out of the wasp's nest by going security for him; and not only that, but to prove him as innocent as he was thought guilty, he made him cashier and confidential man in his own photographic establishment; *but he did not keep him long!*

They are all alike, these brilliant men of genius!

CHAPTER XV

JOURNALISM UNDER THE EMPIRE

UNDER the Empire the Chamber was dumb, the press spoke only to be gagged. When, in 1864, the country recovered some liberty, it may be said that nearly all the journalists came from the Ministry of the Interior, passing through the cabinet of the Prefecture of Police.

After the election to the Chamber of five members of the Opposition, the press breathed again. It felt a trifle freer; the Government was forced to yield, in a measure, to the demands of a press, regenerated by the tribune. M. Thiers, the most influential man of the press and the tribune of former days, had now resumed his seat on the parliamentary benches. Overthrown a dozen years earlier, with the statue of Law, by the soldiers of the coming Empire, this son of the Revolution had now returned armed with all his rights.

Henceforth Liberty must be reckoned with. The mists of night had passed; the sun of July 14 rose to warm the hearts of the exiles of December. Public opinion began to speak in the newspapers, although, to tell the truth, they only echoed the Palais-Royal [Orléanists], spiteful to the Tuileries, and were actually

the organs of a liberal deputy, a spy of the Château on his Republican editors. The two leading papers, the *Opinion National* and the *Courrier du Dimanche*, had for directors, the first, M. Adolphe Guéroult, very dear to the Palais-Royal; the second, a Wallachian, who well knew the way to the Tuileries.

What these journals of the moderate Opposition received of *communiqués pour rire* [humbug tips] would be incredible. They emanated from the cabinet of the official press, whose managers almost daily made up pages for those two journals. These "communications" rained upon them like a curse from heaven; but to the good public they seemed to be veritable benedictions. At last, public opinion was satisfied; liberty breathed again; and the simple public never suspected that it was the Government that was half-opening the doors and windows of the Opposition — the *official* Opposition — press!

The police had formal orders, emanating from the office of M. Lagrange, to keep close watch on all newspapers, great and small, born or to be born. They were to be either smothered or *turned*. The Château possessed an amiable deputy who had a particular gift for turning an Opposition paper. Through the great experience of this deputy, the dreaded journal soon became either inoffensive or still-born. The affair was managed as follows:

When a citizen, Orléanist or Republican, rich and ambitious, felt the need of creating a liberal sheet, this liberal deputy was sent to him. The deputy, a former

journalist himself under the late monarchy, endeavoured to show the proprietor of the new paper that the Empire was the most liberal of governments. He proved it (being secretly in the pay of the Château) by assuring him he should be relieved of giving bonds in a sum of money if that sum were applied towards the salary of a sub-editor to be selected by himself.

It was very rare that the liberal citizen refused these suggestions of the liberal deputy. However liberal a citizen may be, he is none the less flattered to be considered a something by the Government he wishes to tease, and so obtain, as the result of his teasing, the cross of the Legion of Honour, which pleases his wife and gives prestige to his name. Then the sheet announced as liberal, does not answer the expectations of its subscribers; who fall off and it dies. Or it becomes a journal of the Empire, receiving "communications" from the Ministry of the Interior.

At this period a journalist, returning from Africa, created, under the patronage of the Château, a correspondence which, by Machiavellian contrivance, was entered into and published by editors who had been proscribed in December, 1851. When the evolution towards liberalism was forced upon the Empire, this African was ordered to entice from the ranks of these proscribed ones certain political chroniclers who would be willing to write under his dictation that the Emperor, the author of the book on "Pauperism," was the most liberal of the sovereigns of Europe. This correspondence was the egg of the Ollivier Ministry.

Certain foreigners also had a newspaper of their own, upholding the liberal Empire, and its principle of great protestant nationalities. The countess, *La Prussienne*, received part of the money that fell into the hands of these men. Their newspaper, which offended all the religious convictions of the nation, died, and was succeeded, also under feminine supervision, by the *Revue des races latines*.

At this epoch the public moral sense was so obliterated that it knew not how to distinguish good from evil, the just from the unjust. The new generation had grown up in a leaden atmosphere, and knew not how or where to turn its aspirations. Humiliated by the present, furious with the past, anxious about the future, which seemed more darksome even than the present, it laughed at all things in order not to weep. This brave youth of the nation, longing for a pilot to guide it on a sea without a shore and without horizon, was as cruelly misled by these journalists of a *humbugging Opposition* as it was by the open supporters of the Empire who, in their journals, tried forever to deceive it!

The police never quitted by a hair's breadth these journalists, preparing for the struggle under tents that were furnished by the Government. But other spies were spying upon both, and these spies were — Germans.

Among the journalists most closely watched by the police at that time was Villemessant, the director of the *Figaro*, that cradle of the celebrated lanternist, Henri Rochefort. I knew Villemessant at a time when he

was very far from being the fortunate director of the *Figaro*. I had to follow him through all his numerous judicial tribulations. I can say that this astounding journalist, full of dash and initiative, was worth far more than many of his brotherhood who have stoned him. His greatest wrong-doing was that he shrank from nothing that could produce a good jest of *his brew*. Without bitterness, without malignity, he was the first to repair any harm he had done to others. After all, in the journalistic battle that Villemessant fought to his last hour, he harmed himself only; to all others he did good.

When I was commissary of police attached to the theatres, I was constantly with him; he was then a petty journalist, with very strong desires. His sheets, announcing and puffing the various plays and sold at the doors of the theatres, depended on the Prefecture; and he had need of me to discipline his numerous vendors, who kept up a rivalry with those of the *Entr'acte*. Though Villemessant was not at that time celebrated, he was already *somebody*. He played high at the Café Bonvalet; he lived as a lord among the rich merchants of the Markets, worthy inhabitants of the Temple quarter, whom he quizzed with inexhaustible fun. His rabelaisian sallies exploded in phrases that were his alone. He had already seen much and lived much.

At a period when everybody courted the Republic, he founded two little fault-finding and satirical sheets — the *Bouche de Fer* and *Le Petit Caporal*. He was

legitimist, but I do not think that his faith in his prince was very robust; what I do know is, that his faith in himself was mighty. *Gil Blas* and *Figaro* — he incarnated himself in those types, by the self-assurance of the one and the shrewdness of the other. What he derived from both was their spirit of mischief.

Though he began as an *annoncier* [puffer of plays], the lowest of all trades, it was only to take a better spring to the heights of journalism. A gentleman by birth [Jean Hippolyte de Villemessant], with Prudhomme's ideas in politics, he desired to grow rich in his profession that he might crush by his luxury the bourgeois crowd he laughed at and envied only for their enjoyments. I can see him now with his blue coat and brass buttons, his low shoes and their rosettes in place of the steel buckles of the old régime. I recall his calm, penetrating eyes, his short, thick hair planted on a low forehead, his sensual lips, his large chin, already double, showing a will subject only to consuming aspirations.

Such was Villemessant at forty years of age. He was still in search of his career, having, like Beaumarchais, touched at all things — art, politics, commerce, literature. He watched for a Mæcenas, who never came because at this time such beings existed no longer. He sought for fortune and never found it till his *malice* and his *flair* showed him that the Mæcenas of the nineteenth century was Mr. Everybody, and to win him one must reckon above all on the follies of others. A great mystifier and hoaxer, he loved nothing so well

as to play on the foibles of others; and it was through his innate taste for such diversion that in the end he succeeded in founding the most inquisitive and the best informed, the most interesting and the most read of all Parisian newspapers.

Villemessant had but one rival. But the temperament of that rival — quite as original as himself but with less charm — prevented a serious opposition. More Parisian than Villemessant, this compeer in gaiety never aspired to the society of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Democrat, and rival of the royalist, he was satisfied to frolic for "the street." The two founders of the reckless [*gaulois*] press of Paris were Villemessant, father of the *Figaro*, and Commerson, father of the *Tintamarre*. Henri Rochefort was their legitimate successor.

From these two poles gushed the stinging flame of satire on a territory that these jesters really cared nothing for, namely, politics. Commerson and Villemessant, Titans of farce, brothers in loose jesting, were, nevertheless, fraternal enemies. But it was not politics that divided them. No, indeed; they would not have fought for a trifle such as that! What estranged them was the matter of subscribers, the question of advertisements. They attacked each other before the public exactly like hucksters in a market.

After the *Coup d'État*, Villemessant was still in search of his career, while Commerson had found his by creating the *Tintamarre*. One day Villemessant, who no longer wrote his little theatre sheets, which had been

swept away by Morny's broom, went to see his friend and addressed him somewhat as follows:

"Comrade! my prince is too honest! He has prejudices that I don't share. I am reduced to inaction. Inaction at forty years of age! that's tough! Now, inasmuch as from the point of view of our political rancours we have the same way of thinking, though with very different objects, I have come to offer you my services. Give me your book of subscribers and advertisers, and if my long experience in journalism can be of use to you, I will give it to you with all my heart. As I can't be useful to my people, timid things! I am ready to help the cleverest man I know. It is a White ready to be useful to a Red! A good combination that! The present people have broken my cane, and I'll break another on the backs of my cravens."

Commerson, very trusting when his vanity or his interests were flattered, agreed, and he opened his books to Villemessant. At the last moment, however, Villemessant was touched by remorse, thinking his "comrade" too innocent.

"But," he added, "suppose I turn traitor? Suppose I found a paper like yours, won't you regret having shown me your book of addresses?"

"My son, I'm not afraid of you!" retorted Commerson in his Olympian tone. "There is but one *Tintamarre!*"

That was true; but eight days later there was a *Figaro*.

However, when Villemessant became the most successful journalist of his time, he redeemed, by acts of extreme beneficence, by freaks of unparalleled generosity, these tricks, either rash or cruel, to which his craving for enjoyments and his love of hoaxing prompted him. A volume would not suffice to relate them. I have dwelt on the portraits of these two men because they are the most singular and interesting figures of Parisian journalism during the Empire. They left a joint offspring, issuing from their very being — Henri Rochefort.

These two journalists, two singular personalities dating from the generation of 1830, closed behind them the gates of bohemia, and died with the key in their pockets.

Commerson could not *to-day* pawn his watch to found the *Tintamarre;* Villemessant could not *now* found his *Figaro* with the savings of a few toothless bagmen. Ingenious minds, free from prejudices, they founded, without capital, that which all the capital on earth could not have founded — Parisian journalism. They established its power by that which is least stable — satire. They did much against an epoch of which they were not the outcome. Inextinguishable laughers, they attacked, solely to create laughter, the régime of an empire that amazed them.

The police of that period prepared, as I have already said, a large part of the political newspapers. Their editors were often men bought by the Prefecture; though the younger men, pupils of the writers of 1848,

thought it strange that before they could give their thoughts to the public they must go, at the word of command, for political news to the Ministry of the Interior, and for general items to the Prefecture of Police. Against these free lances of the Parisian press it was difficult to take strong action. When bombarded by the magistracy, they never could be brought to believe that, for having exploded a few satirical jests against the Tuileries out of pure gaiety of heart, they were really threatened with the anger of their masters.

But if an old stager like Villemessant laughed at the pasteboard thunderbolts of Jupiter Cæsar, and asked, when taken to the Conciergerie, for fresh wall-paper on the cell he knew so well, the young fry of the independent press did not go to prison so gaily. I have seen many a young journalist weep when I showed him my warrant for his arrest — warrants of which my pockets were full. Later, these very men became political personages only because they had slept against their will in Sainte-Pélagie — less through the fault of their articles, usually immature and colourless, than through the over-zeal of the henchmen of imperialism.

How many "irreconcilables" were recruited in this way to the Opposition, then organizing under M. Thiers without a sound! — disciplining themselves, like the companions of Ulysses, before entering the wooden horse that was to batter down the imperial edifice! These recruits became a legion when the pistol of Prince Pierre Bonaparte brought down the youngest of those journalists and decided the fate of the Empire.

That knell, which echoed from Auteuil to the Tuileries, would not have made Napoleon III turn pale if he had had the sense to laugh at Rochefort instead of hunting him down by his private police.

If the politicians at the Prefecture had not forced Rochefort to quit the *Figaro,* he would not have started the *Lanterne*, and the *Lanterne* would not have led to the deputation.

But if the Emperor knew not how to laugh, his Court did. At Compiègne, where the courtiers, men and women, clustered, the *Lanterne* was ever in demand. Nothing amused them more than to see their history traced in lines of fire by that satirist. Nothing pleases valets so much as scandals told against their masters. At Compiègne Rochefort's *Lanterne* was in every hand, — those of the coachmen, those of the seigneurs.

At Compiègne other events took place, all tending to one result — the fall of the Empire. Towards the end of the year 1869, the Emperor was alone one evening in the Château about nine o'clock. He walked up and down the room, visibly preoccupied and apparently waiting for some one. The palace was plunged in darkness and deep silence. The great vestibule, where a footman was dozing, was scarcely lighted. In a salon adjoining the private apartment of the Emperor, a few ordnance officers were seated at a distance from their captain, who was reading, with a bored air, in the chimney-corner.

Beyond the courtyard, near the forest, a few faint

lights showed groups of men, pacing to and fro, between the forest and the courtyard. These men formed a squad from the Prefecture. By their attitude it was evident that some one was expected, some one whose coming was both desired and dreaded.

Who was it?

It was Émile Ollivier.

Nine strokes sounded from the clock — the same that had marked the hour of the first interview between Napoleon I and Marie Louise in that very palace. A movement was seen at the edge of the forest. It was caused by the police of Paris gathering closer around the man whom the Emperor awaited.

Surely it was a strange thing to see an Emperor, who, to the eyes of France, seemed to be the master of all things, reduced to receive in profound mystery the man whom he had selected to restore to the nation the liberty he had taken from it, the prestige he had caused it to lose. Yet to this had the Emperor come in 1869. He escaped from the Tuileries because Prussian spies swarmed in his apartments; at Compiègne he escaped his own courtiers to receive a man, formerly his enemy, who promised him the support of those who he might have known must ever remain his implacable enemies.

Morny had crowned the conspirator-prince at a period when the Empire had been prepared for by an abortive Republic. Émile Ollivier could only hasten the fall of that Empire by blunders that gave reason to a Republic. Avoiding the guard-house, this renegade of "the five" was forced to issue from the forest like a robber

ÉMILE OLLIVIER

from a wood. The Emperor at all periods of his life and reign liked above all things surprises, circumventions, and the wiles of the police.

Émile Ollivier became Minister because that democrat, getting into the skin of an imperialist, persuaded the Emperor, and the Empress who believed him, that the youth of France was ready to follow him against the old Napoleonic party. Yet the strange manner in which Ollivier entered Compiègne by night, his head hidden in a muffler, without his spectacles, and escorted by policemen, could not have given the Emperor any great guarantee of success. In fact, this face-about of the Empire towards Liberty simply unchained her to its ruin!

On this evening, when the Emperor had carefully evaded the Court to meet Ollivier in secret, he received him as he had twenty years earlier received his brother, that renegade from Orléanism, as Ollivier was from Republicanism. It was the same interview — except that the Emperor, ill, anxious, and morose, had no longer the phlegmatic audacity of former days, and Ollivier had nothing of Morny but his self-assurance.

Ollivier left Compiègne, as Morny had left the Élysée, at one in the morning. What had passed during that long interview? The walls of the palace alone could tell, and they were as dumb as the walls of the Élysée.

What was not a mystery for any one was that after this interview, as after the Élysée interview, Ollivier, like Morny, had his interviews, great and small, with their

Majesties. Those mysterious meetings ended, the one in civil war and the massacre of the Boulevard Montmartre; the other in foreign war, made with a light heart, and the invasion of France!

Such was one of the last mysteries which in 1869 passed under the eyes of the police in the forest of Compiègne. We knew of others equally important the consequences of which were as fatal to France. The last, and perhaps the most important in its immediate consequences, was brought about by *La Prussienne*, that spy of Prussia whom I have already named. The harm this woman did to the Empire and to Napoleon III was, I repeat, incalculable. It contributed largely, when their Majesties became aware that they were duped, to the declaration of the Prussian war.

On the day of a hunt at Compiègne — hunts were numerous in the forest, and were made the pretext of many a rendezvous — *La Prussienne* was *tête-à-tête* with the Emperor, whom she ruled, no longer restraining herself in what she said. She ridiculed the Empress, telling him of her bigotry, which, she said, expended itself on amulets; of her mind which never went beyond frivolities; of her qualities which were neither good nor bad but absolutely negative.

Her Majesty, who had many reasons to distrust *La Prussienne*, warned by her own spies, arrived in the midst of this interview like an avenging Diana. What then took place, my agents who witnessed the scene scarcely ventured to tell me. Suffice it to say that

on the following day the Empress announced her departure for Egypt.

This journey to the East was undertaken, said the official newspapers, to visit the Holy Land, and accept the amiable invitations of the Sultan Abdul Aziz and of the Khedive to be present at the opening of the Suez Canal — a visit that gave the august lady much pleasure, judging by her letters to the Emperor. Her absence lasted till Prussia threw off the mask and compelled the Emperor to declare war. We can imagine with what satisfaction the Empress welcomed the proclamation of hostilities, which Émile Ollivier announced from the tribune with so light a heart in presence of the representatives of the nation.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST THUNDERCLAP — TROPMANN

THE *Coup d'État* had, in one night, taken France by the throat. Two thunderclaps preceded her deliverance before the Empire disappeared under the shame of Sedan and the invasion. These thunderclaps were the crimes of Tropmann and Prince Pierre Bonaparte.

At the beginning of these memoirs, when speaking of the end of Louis-Philippe's reign, I said that there are fatal hours when, for individuals as for nations, all things become a cause of decadence and cataclysm. That hour was now approaching Napoleon III precisely as it had come to the king whom he had dethroned.

The Emperor had lost his Duc de Morny as Louis-Philippe, at the end of his reign, had lost the Princess Amélie, his Egeria. Lonely, ill, exhausted, like the old king against whom he had so long conspired, the Emperor found himself in exactly the same situation — except that he, far more guilty than Louis-Philippe, was brought, in 1869, face to face with crimes more shocking and terrible than that of the Duc de Praslin, odious as it was.

Late in the evening of September 19, 1869, a hackney-coach stopped before the gate of Pantin [a village near Paris in the direction of Saint-Denis]. The night was dark, the wind blew hard, and thick clouds veiled the face of the moon. The coach, after stopping a moment at the gate of Pantin as though the driver were undecided, continued its way, the man whipping up his horses at the order of a second man, who put his head out of the carriage-window and ordered him to drive on.

This second man sat on the back seat of the carriage, opposite to a lady who had beside her two young children. Three other children were on the back seat with the man. The carriage proceeded till the driver was told to stop in a road bordered on one side by a large grass-field. The man in the coach got out with the lady and the two younger children. He told the others to stay where they were:

"We are going," he said, "to meet your father, and will bring him back with us."

So saying, he pointed to a high white wall at the farther end of the field which gleamed now and then in the uncertain rays of the moon. The man walked first, the lady, carrying the youngest child, followed him.

The driver, to pass the time, got down from his seat and stood with his back to the field, talking to the three children left in the coach. He asked them, through the carriage-window, why they were travelling so late.

"We don't know," replied the eldest of the three.

"Our papa has sent for us, and his friend brought us here to meet him."

It was cold; the wind whistled noisily about them, drowning all other sounds except the barking of a dog and a few cries from the direction of the wall.

About twenty-five minutes had elapsed when the man returned. He told the three children to get out, and said imperatively to the driver:

"You can go. It is decided that we stay here."

The coach was turned round and went back to Paris.

The next morning the owner of the field, named Langlois, saw, on walking across his property, a singular mound that he had not seen before. He dug into it, out of curiosity, and presently recoiled in terror. Little by little, he uncovered the body of a woman: then the bodies of five children. The mother had twenty-nine wounds, all in the back, two in the loins. These wounds, and those on the children, seemed to have been made with a pickaxe.

But by the contortions of these bodies, the first witness of the horrible sight declared, even before the experts confirmed him, that life was not extinct when the earth was thrown upon them. They had been buried alive!

The news of this horrible discovery in the Langlois field spread rapidly. It burst like a thunderbolt, spreading stupefaction and horror throughout Paris. The magistracy was at once informed, and immediately I was ordered to attend some of them to the

scene of the crime. A numerous and compact crowd were hurrying from all parts of Paris; it invaded the Langlois field so that we found it necessary to call out a large police force to control the over-excited populace, already too much stirred up by political questions. The first care, therefore, of the magistracy was to satisfy public opinion; to give food for its curiosity and its desires for vengeance.

At any cost, the guilty persons must be discovered, a full explanation must be given of the crime, or the Opposition journals, to please the excited populace, would not fail to say that the police department was so absorbed by politics that it had no agents to hold criminals in awe and to answer for the public safety.

I went to work at once, sending at the same time my craftiest sleuth-hounds into all corners of Paris and along the lines of all the railways. I thus learned from various reports that a very young man, a mechanician, had lately lived, up to the evening before the murder, at the Hôtel du Chemin de fer du Nord, but that since the murder he had not returned there.

Another report informed me that on the night of the murder one of my agents had noticed a hackney-coach proceeding towards Pantin, in which were more persons than the law allowed; they were seven in all, — five children, a woman about forty years of age, and a young man about twenty. When my agent tried to follow and stop the carriage, because the driver was cheating his company, he was himself stopped short by a man who said that he owed him money. The

time it took my inspector to convince the man of his error made him lose sight of the carriage, of which he had not had time to take the number.

The inspector then contented himself by waiting on the spot where the carriage had passed him, reflecting that the driver, being at the extremity of Paris at such an hour, must return the same way in order to put up his coach for the night. He was right; the carriage came back empty, but the driver was urging his horses so that they passed like the wind, and the officer was unable either to stop or follow them. But he saw that the coach belonged to the Compagnie des Petites-Voitures.

Thirdly, a photograph found on the body of the woman was the portrait of a man who resembled, in all respects, the description given me of the young mechanician who had lodged at the Railway Hotel. Moreover, the same inspector who had obtained the description of him at the hotel, was quite certain he had seen that very man late on the night of the murder, in the rue Grange-Batelière, coming out, in company with another man, from a tavern kept by a Mme. D——, who went by the name of "the woman in spectacles."

These two men seemed nervous: they wore mufflers; their caps were pulled over their eyes; they were dressed as if for a long journey; and they took the direction of the railroad to Havre. As all the other reports coincided with this one, I did not hesitate to go myself to Havre, convinced that if not too late, I was on the track of the murderer.

Meantime I had obtained much additional information which was chiefly as follows: I discovered and questioned the driver of the carriage, who declared that about half-past ten o'clock that Sunday evening a young man about twenty years of age had engaged him; the young man was accompanied by a lady and five children. The driver's description of this young man tallied with the photograph found on the woman, and also with the description given of the young mechanician at the Railway Hotel. The coachman related to me how the murderer had made the mother and five children leave the carriage, declaring that he himself *had no suspicion of what was taking place.*

Next: the young man had registered at the Railway Hotel as Jean Kinck, mechanician, from Roubaix. I learned, on going myself to the hotel, that about six o'clock on the Sunday evening, a lady with five children had arrived at the hotel and had asked for Jean Kinck, who was out. She went away, after engaging two rooms and leaving a basket. She did not return.

I discovered by questioning all the people of the neighbourhood that about the same hour a young man bought, in the shop of a tool-maker, a pickaxe and a spade, which he returned and took away at eight o'clock. According to the information given by the coachman the murders must have been done about eleven o'clock that night.

I had no sooner reached Havre than I heard of an unexpected arrest made by a gendarme of the maritime department. He had seen in a tavern in the rue

Royale a group of strange-looking individuals and he asked for their names and papers. One of them (whose age and appearance answered to those of the young man of whom I was in search) replied that he was a foreigner. All the more reason, said the gendarme, that he should show his papers. On his refusal to do so, the gendarme arrested him, saying that he should take him to the police court, where he could make his explanation. He took him by way of the quay.

The young man took advantage of the passing of a carriage to wrench himself free from the grasp of the gendarme. He rushed to the edge of the quay, sprang upon a raft, and thence into the water, with the evident intention of drowning himself. A ship's caulker, who saw the act, jumped in himself, without waiting to remove his clothes, and brought the man to the surface quite exhausted. When placed upon the quay he was unconscious, and they carried him thence to the police station, where an apothecary brought him to, after which he was taken to the hospital.

When his clothes were removed, a bundle of papers were found carefully concealed under his shirt. These papers appeared to show that he was no other than Jean Kinck of Roubaix.

As soon as I learned these details from the magistracy of Havre, to whom I had immediately made myself known, I asked to be taken to the hospital where lay the man whom chance had thus given into my hands as the murderer of the victims at Pantin. I found him lying in a bed, guarded by two police

agents, and wrapped in a white woollen counterpane, with which he tried to conceal his features. There was no doubt that he answered to the description of the man I was in search of.

I had not come a moment too soon; for on further inquiry, I found that his passage had been taken on a ship sailing for New York on the following day. On the road to Havre he seemed to have passed under various names, such as Wolff, Vander, Gustave Kinck, and Jean Kinck. I returned to the hospital at eleven o'clock fully convinced that I held the murderer. The hospital doctor having assured me he could safely be removed to Paris, I took him to the railroad and placed him in a reserved first-class carriage. Having passed a comparatively calm night, the nervous shock which followed his immersion in the water had passed off, leaving him very weak, and he walked with difficulty, so that the head warder of the prison had to take him by the arm and support him. He was not handcuffed.

During the journey I did not question him; I allowed him to keep silence. His state of nervous and feverish irritation showed itself in abrupt, impatient gestures. When we reached Paris, about four in the afternoon, I took him direct to the Morgue, where the keeper, the judge, and the physicians, already notified by me, awaited us. The six bodies found in the Langlois field were then in the purification-room, behind the exposition-room.

I took the man I supposed to be Jean Kinck direct to the six bodies lying on marble slabs. The examin-

ing judge, who expected us, said to him, pointing to the victims:

"Do you recognize those persons?"

The murderer advanced a few steps. He scratched his ear in the way that a cat does. Shrugging his shoulders, he turned half-round, and said with great coolness and with no trembling of the voice:

"Yes, monsieur."

Then, pointing with his forefinger to each body in succession, he added:

"That is Mme. Kinck; that is Émile; that is Henri; that is Alfred; that is Achille; that is little Marie."

He looked at them without even uncovering his head. Those present were horrified by such an exhibition of cynicism.

This confronting over, I and the murderer (whom I did not leave a moment), with the assistant chief of police, and my secretary, S——, went into the council-room to sign the *procès-verbal.* Here the prisoner, in spite of his cynicism, seemed to make a strong effort over himself. Recoiling from the table where lay the papers, he declared that he had been only the instrument of Jean Kinck and his eldest son, Gustave.

"I helped, it is true," he said; "I pushed them into the trench; but I did not strike, — I only *held* them while they were struck by Jean and Gustave Kinck and —"

He muttered a third name, but did not complete it. He lowered his head, and said no more. The judge, after waiting for a while, said:

"Then you had accomplices?"

"Perhaps," he replied, without raising his head. Then he added: "But you will *never find them.* I am enough for you."

Nothing further could be got out of him. I then, with my secretary, took him to the Mazas Prison, having the greatest difficulty in forcing our carriage through the surging crowd, already dangerously excited.

At Mazas the murderer gave his true name to the director of the prison. It was Jean-Baptiste Tropmann, age nineteen, born at Cernay, on the upper Rhine, by profession a mechanician. I left him in Mazas with four watchers ordered to observe his every movement.

All these discoveries only cast more mystery still over the horrible catastrophe. Where was the father Kinck? Where was the son Gustave? The curiosity and impatience of the public, over-excited by the horror of the affair, were pushed to the highest pitch, How could it be otherwise? Tropmann was arrested, but justice was not enlightened as to the real truth of the horrible affair; and it could not be until Jean and Gustave Kinck were found, dead or alive!

Once more chance, or Providence, took part in this memorable case. On the 26th of September a man named Hughs, a butcher, discovered at one side of the Langlois field another trench, older in date than that dug for Mme. Kinck and her children. In it was the body of a man with several wounds in his breast. The head, with much of the hair torn off, showed a long

struggle with his adversary. Not far from the trench a hatchet was found, lightly covered with earth; also some handfuls of brown hair the color of Tropmann's hair. No doubt remained: Tropmann was not the mere assistant in the murder of the Kinck family, he was the principal murderer himself.

When the face of the victim, covered with coagulated blood, was washed, it was seen to be that of a young man with round, beardless cheeks and chestnut hair. A scar under the right ear was recognized by two inhabitants of Roubaix as a well-known mark on Gustave Kinck, the eldest son. It was evident that he was a victim, not a murderer, and that his slayer was the man who accused him — Tropmann.

This discovery was scarcely made before all Paris rushed to the Langlois field. More than six hundred thousand persons passed, from first to last, up the rue Lafayette on this dismal pilgrimage. When the commissaries of police reached the place to transfer the body to the Morgue, the railway station was so jammed that they had to shut the iron wickets to prevent the people from passing in or out. The body was placed in a cart and covered with straw, and escorted by a squadron of gendarmes on horseback. But even so, my agents had great difficulty in getting through the crowd, which demanded with odious cries to see the victim.

Meantime I went to Mazas with a street-coach to take Tropmann to the Morgue — though without telling him where we were going. I hoped, by putting

him suddenly face to face with his seventh victim, to shake his coolness and get the better of his self-possession.

We reached the great hall where the doctors and the judge awaited us. I placed Tropmann instantly before the body. He gave a cry of horror, exclaiming:

"Ah! *le malheureux!*" [the unfortunate fellow!]

Then, to disguise the painful impression caused by this unexpected sight, which destroyed his system of defence, he passed his handkerchief over his eyes and thus concealed his face.

The judge said imperatively:

"Put down that handkerchief — you are not weeping — and look!"

The wretch then crossed his arms on his chest, and without removing his cap he fixed his eyes on the mutilated body.

"Do you recognize this corpse?" asked the judge.

"Yes," he said in a curt voice; "yes, that is Gustave."

"Whom you murdered?" said the judge quickly.

"Oh no!" cried Tropmann; "his father did it."

"But you said," replied the judge, "that the son with the father committed these murders. How, then, can the murderer be murdered?"

"Because the father, probably, killed him that he might not some day confess this abominable crime."

"That is false," said the judge. "You are imposing on us to keep up your line of defence. But you now know that we cannot believe what you say."

"Oh!" exclaimed Tropmann, not answering the judge, and speaking as if to himself, "I wish I were in his place."

"Whose place?" asked the judge.

Tropmann kept silence, and the judge said:

"Speak."

Tropmann made no reply; his obstinate silence cut short the investigation. In spite of the unexpected shock which his soul must have felt at the sight of that seventh dead body, his face, during this second confronting (which lasted about twenty-five minutes), betrayed no emotion. I watched him with the closest attention, and I observed, however, that there was less cynicism in his manner than on the former occasion. He was quite as calm, but more thoughtful. He evidently understood that the discovery of this seventh body weakened his plan of defence. As I took him back to Mazas, Tropmann did not say a single word to me.

After the discovery of Gustave Kinck's body labourers were set to work to dig over the whole of that fatal field, in the expectation that Jean Kinck's body was also there. In vain; nothing further was found.

It now became imperative to find Jean Kinck, dead or alive. As for me, whose active career had been signalized by very many delicate and difficult arrests of great criminals, I found myself, at sixty-five years of age, confronted by an assassin whose crimes went far beyond any I had hitherto come in contact with. The means that I now took to discover traces of Trop-

mann's eighth victim came more from my instinct than my reason.

I asked myself why Tropmann had lodged for a month close to the station of the Eastern Railroad; and why he took his meals in a house serving as a centre for Germans, Alsatians, and other foreigners, whose differences were often settled by knives. Ever since the Jud affair, I knew from what quarter blew the wind of assassination. Instinctively, after studying the papers found on Tropmann when dragged from the water at Havre, my eyes turned towards his native country. Everything told me that the body of Jean Kinck might be in Alsace, and that we had discovered the finale of the crimes before discovering their beginning. The result showed that I was not mistaken.

Tropmann *could not* have been alone in the commission of these murders; the time, the circumstances, his physical strength, all forbade it. He might have been, like Jud, mixed up, perhaps unconsciously, in grave events which blindly controlled him. These crimes, which might have had cupidity for their motive in the first instance, might also have been connected, by some mysterious affiliation, with causes of a different and far more important order than mere love of gain. That political causes were concerned in these murders is my firm conviction. The arm that struck the Kinck family — shortly before the invasion — may have been that of a common murderer, covetous and cruel, but its victims were also the victims of the already strained and critical situation of France.

The details ignored at the trial of this celebrated case, the points left obscure, though pointed out to me by Tropmann before he died, permit me no doubt on this subject. Tropmann will ever remain as mysterious a personage as Jud, whose very existence has been denied.

No one, at first sight, could have discovered on Tropmann's features the secret propensities of his soul. This young lad of nineteen had the gentle face of a young girl or a divinity student. He seemed delicate; his general structure was lax and effeminate. But in spite of his apparent delicacy he possessed a marvellous agility and a latent muscular strength which must have been a powerful help in the execution of his crimes. He had a broad, open forehead, slightly retreating at the top like that of wild animals. His chestnut hair, soft and abundant, was the object of his particular care. The good effect of the upper part of his face was cancelled by his large, flat ears, his narrow, curving nose, like the beak of a bird of prey; by his mouth, with its thick upper lip that a budding moustache did not hide, and by his huge teeth. These things gave to the lower part of his face, so gentle in the upper part, a savage expression, recalling that of a bulldog. His hazy eyes never brightened, except under the touch of a strong impression; then he raised his eyelids, which he usually kept lowered, and his glance became keen, very brilliant, but crafty.

When he felt pressed, before his judges, by arguments that proved he was lying, he made his habitual

cat-like gesture of passing his hand above his ear. But, like all murderers whom I have known, it was by his hands that the nature of this monster was fully revealed. Although so young, his hand was dry and wrinkled. It was a large, strong, fleshless hand, the thumb of which reached to the upper joint of the fingers. The wide separation between the thumb and the forefinger gave to that unnatural, wicked hand the look of a vulture's talon. When in the prisoner's dock he grasped the balustrade with the long, bony fingers of that hideous and repulsive hand, the favourable impression given by his gentle countenance was effaced; one could think only of an octopus or some other foul and ferocious beast.

I now set all my batteries in motion, — upon Havre, upon Alsace, and to the east, west, and north of France, while my assistant chief of police never quitted the scene of the murders, exploring, with his agents, its neighbourhood, especially the German quarter, where, in my opinion, Tropmann had auxiliaries if not accomplices.

I sent my secretary, S——, to Roubaix (place of residence of the Kinck family), thence to Cernay in Alsace, Tropmann's native place, to find Jean Kinck, who (probably killed before his family, and missing in Paris) might be found in his own region. A letter found in the Kinck house at Roubaix put S—— on the right track of Tropmann's last, or rather first, victim.

This letter showed that Jean Kinck, one month before the murder of his family, had arranged to go to

Alsace with his compatriot, J. B. Tropmann, and there found, at Guebviller (Kinck's birthplace), a manufacturing business. In another letter, of later date, Jean Kinck directed his wife and children to leave Roubaix and come with Tropmann to meet him, as soon as their "business" should be completed. Thus he gave the itinerary of his murderer. This letter threw a strong light on the latter's actions. It was clear that Tropmann, returning to Paris and leaving Jean Kinck in Alsace, had done to him in his native country what he went to Paris to do to the rest of the family. The essential thing now was to find Jean Kinck, who Tropmann still insisted was the slayer of his wife and children.

While I sent my secretary, S——, to Alsace, to discover if possible the body of the eighth victim, which, judging by the letters found at Roubaix, ought to be lying somewhere between Bollwiller and Cernay, I scarcely left Tropmann alone in his cell at Mazas. I pressed him with questions based on those letters, and on certain other information derived from an Alsatian agent under the orders of my secretary. I knew from him that Tropmann and Kinck had been seen drinking together in a tavern at Bollwiller, and that from that moment no further news of Kinck could be obtained. Guiding myself by this information, I questioned Tropmann, who replied:

"You want to know what we did after we left Bollwiller. Well, we went and took a lodging in the castle of Wattviller near Cernay."

"But," I said, "that castle, like all the other castles in Alsace, is an uninhabitable ruin."

"What does that matter," he replied, "if there are cellars?"

"What could you do in cellars?"

"Coin money. That was the business, the mine of gold, from which we were to draw the thousand-franc notes to cure my poverty and that of my family, and enrich Kinck. But Kinck had scruples. He wanted to get rich in another way — and that is what killed him."

"You are fooling me," I replied, "with such stories. You have read all that in some novel."

"I am telling you the truth, Monsieur Claude."

After that, I could get nothing more out of him.

Some days later, I received from S—— and the Alsatian agent, who knew the country well, a pair of trousers spotted with blood which they had found near the pond of Obwiller. I sent orders at once to search the pond, and I told Tropmann, intentionally, of what was being done.

"All nonsense!" he said. "They will find nothing in that pond. It is not there they ought to look. If you don't know how to send your agents to the place where Kinck was killed, take me to Alsace and I'll lead you to the right spot."

I answered that it was not in my power to do that till the body was found, when, of course, he would be taken there to be confronted with it. I said this to encourage his desire which he had several times ex-

pressed, doubtless believing that, once in Alsace, he would be rescued or aided to escape by the *invisible* hands that had pushed him on to do murder.

At last I received the following dispatch from Strasburg:

"Kinck, father, found near the castle of Herrenfluch, in the forest of Uffholtz, Upper Rhine."

At the same time, I received from the authorities of Belfort a dispatch, dated Cernay, as follows:

"Corpse Kinck, father, found at 1.30, near the edge of the forest adjoining the fields of M. Aimé Gros, in the judicial district of Belfort, commune of Wattviller, near the ruins of the castle. Body in putrefaction. Unrecognizable; but socks knitted of same wool as those of Kinck children. Linen marked Jean Kinck."

This time Tropmann had not lied. Nevertheless chance alone had led to the discovery of the body at the moment when I was beginning to despair of ever finding it. My explorers were guided by a man named Héguette, of Wattviller. He, seeing a quantity of crows collected on one spot, suspected that there might be something there to attract them. The party advanced to the spot near the old castle and discovered the body!

On receipt of this news from my secretary, I has-

tened to inform the Prefect of Police and the Minister of the Interior. To my great surprise, I did not receive until the following day an answer, which may be rendered thus:

"Hasten nothing; let things take their course."

It was exactly the same as in the Jud affair! I was ordered to be inactive at the moment when the action of the law ought to have been quickest to discover the whole truth! Once more I understood that in the Tropmann affair as in the Jud affair there was something other than the double question of robbery and murder.

Before entering upon the last phases of this celebrated case — the trial of which was so managed as to make Tropmann alone responsible for the crimes — we must examine the political situation of Alsace in 1868. At this period all that part of the Vosges which lies between Mulhausen and Switzerland was in the grasp of a dumb terror; it no longer possessed itself. The condition of this part of France was intolerable for the notables of the region. They had met it by isolating themselves from the population, kept in a state of ferment by the agents of the German Protestant party.

Most of the old castles in the valleys of the Vosges had become the rendezvous of Field-Marshal Moltke's officers. Concealed in the ruined towers — last remains of secular disasters — they studied the topography of

a territory they were resolved to reconquer at any cost. The apprehensions that these mysterious incursions spread through the region were skilfully made use of by criminals. German spies lurked like owls in the pine forests, protected by the old ruined castles, in the towers of which they established their headquarters; and criminals, smugglers, and counterfeiters, lurking in the cellars of those very castles, were not afraid of the Germans — they felt sure, if not of protection, at least of tolerance from the enemies of their country.

In 1869, our stealthy neighbours had entangled in the meshes of their diplomacy all the inhabitants of Alsace, — as I had found to my cost, nine years earlier, when I went from Mulhausen to Ferrette on the track of another murderer. Well, I do not hesitate to say that the same policy that hindered the search for truth when I returned from that mission now suspended, in the Tropmann case, the necessary judicial investigations, which were not allowed to go beyond the discovery of Jean Kinck's body.

When Tropmann learned of that discovery, which the judge made known to him, hoping to induce him to confess, the murderer, by nature very dissimulating and very deliberate, shut himself up in fresh reserve against the magistracy. He said absolutely nothing more to them. But some days later, deciding to try every chance to make the authorities send him to Alsace, where he hoped to gain his liberty, he wrote me the following note:

MONSIEUR CLAUDE, — I beg you to come to my cell as soon as possible. I have very *serious* revelations to make you. I salute you.

J. B. TROPMANN.

After taking the opinion of the examining judge from whom I received the advice to give little credit to the prisoner's confidences, I went to see the latter. Evidently it was feared in high places that he would say too much. I divined that thought in the judge's mind; nevertheless I was prepared to profit by what Tropmann might say, for he had certainly of late been in a vein of truthfulness.

As soon as he saw me he received me with an eagerness that contrasted with his usual taciturnity. After sending away the gaolers, I told him I was ready to receive his serious revelations.

"Monsieur Claude," he said, "since the discovery of Kinck, *père*, I have nothing more to conceal. To deserve the indulgence of the law, I have only to tell the truth. Well, you know already, do you not, that it was I who killed Jean Kinck, and that it was I who buried him?"

"You cannot deny the crime," I answered, "inasmuch as you gave us indications as to where the body would be found."

"Do you know how he died?"

"Yes, by prussic acid."

"Do you know how I procured it?"

"No," I said.

"By electro-chemical means, which are very valuable in the coining of counterfeit money. There is a system of electro-silvering and gilding, in which cyanide of potassium is used. In using this system for our monetary work, I became familiar with that poison; and from that to prussic acid you know there is but a step."

"Why," I asked "inasmuch as M. Kinck, according to you, consented to become your accomplice at the Wattviller castle, why did you kill him as soon as he became a useful associate?"

"Because M. Kinck, whose honesty was perpetually at war with his avarice, refused, at the last moment, to be our associate."

"And yet," I objected, "did he not write to his wife that he was certain of making with you over a million?"

"Yes, but by other means than that of coining."

"Do you know that means?"

"It was because I did know it that I killed him."

"What was it?"

"Chance gave it to him one day when he was in the ruins of the old castle where we were to make our workshop for counterfeiting."

"You puzzle me," I said.

"Well," replied Tropmann, smiling, "I shan't puzzle you any longer. Kinck told me that he had overheard, the previous night, a party of strangers talking with great eagerness in one of the towers of the old castle. They were talking German, and what Kinck heard

was neither more nor less than projects of war against France. They were to bring about a certain victory for Germany and the partition of Alsace. Kinck then said to me: 'You understand, my dear Tropmann, that I have no need now to go on with you in a business that is repugnant to my honesty. I possess a state secret which will give me a million. I have noted down word for word in my pocket-book the conversation of those future conquerors. By warning the Emperor of what I know, of what I have noted down, I am certain of a million. As you wished to associate me in your gains, so will I out of gratitude associate you in mine.'"

"All that is not serious," I said, interrupting him, "any more than your tale of false coinage, which you invented to blacken the memory of your benefactor. But even admitting your version, the facts disprove it. How can any one believe that you killed a man because he told you his plans and promised you a share in the profits?"

"It becomes believable," he answered, "when I tell you that I met an old man in the forest who told me he had overheard our conversation, adding, 'the secret that man knows must die with him.'"

"Then it was not merely to obtain Kinck's million that you killed him?"

"No, monsieur."

"But," I added, "you had no such reason for exterminating the whole family at Pantin."

"That family was informed of the secret by Kinck, and therefore it had to die."

"And so, according to you," I said, in a tone of bantering pity, "you acted in behalf of a foreign policy?"

"Oh no! not I," cried Tropmann, "but my accomplices."

"Name them so that I may give some credence to your fables."

"No, I cannot — no, I must not!" cried Tropmann, with extraordinary animation. "Take me to Bollviller where Kinck hid his pocket-book, and you will know all."

"You know very well," I said, "that I have not the power to do so; tell me only the place where Kinck hid that pocket-book — you have already indicated where his body could be found."

"Nonsense!" cried Tropmann, laughing noisily; "you held out that hope to me before; I shall not be such a fool as to be caught twice. It is I who must conduct you to the place where that pocket-book is hidden, or you shall know nothing — nothing — nothing!"

He said those three words in a tone of determination.

To pique this German, whose obstinacy seemed about to stop his confidences, I answered:

"You will say nothing because you have nothing to say. Your coining of false money, your state secret, your pocket-book, are so many fabrications to gain time and get yourself taken to Alsace where you expect to escape."

"And if I do nurse that hope," said Tropmann, with

a jeering air, "I must have accomplices — accomplices whom you deny. If your judges are such fools as to suppose I have the superhuman strength to handle a pickaxe, a spade, a knife, a hatchet, and kill six persons and bury the bodies without assistance, they are not fools enough to think I could escape, like an eel, from your gendarmes without the help of associates. If I have associates, you will admit they are not saints; they may be counterfeiters — or they may be spies such as you set to watch me here."

I felt I was beaten by his logic, but all the same, I saw his object: to get away from Paris and work at his liberty in Alsace. I answered:

"You do very wrong to tarnish the reputation of an honest man like M. Kinck."

"Let me alone!" he exclaimed, shaking his shoulders. "If Kinck had been as scrupulous as you make him out, would he have gone with me to Alsace? Would he have taken a circuitous way to get there? Would he have let himself be taken mysteriously to the depths of the forest, to the ruins of an old castle, where men find — by spying, counterfeiting, smuggling — an easy way to fortune — when they don't find death?"

"You are a clever man, Tropmann," I said, watching him; "you have the art of putting things together which serves you well to shuffle on to others that which weighs upon you alone."

"You say that, Monsieur Claude," said the astute Alsatian, "because you have no reply to make to me.

I have not your education, nor your mind, nor your experience. If I am clever, as you say, it is because I am telling you the truth about my crimes — yes, *my crimes*. You see that I do not any longer deny them. You know very well that if the Kinck family had not *voluntarily* associated itself in my projects — I mean the scheme of which I told you — I could not have been their friend. Would Mme. Kinck, who did not like me, have told her neighbours before starting for Paris, that she was very happy because her husband was about to make a million? Would she have gone with me and taken her whole family by night to a lonely place unless for some mysterious affair for which no precautions were too great? All that is plain as day; and so are the associates I must have had at Pantin and elsewhere. You have but to will to know them! Take me to Alsace. Everything is contained in Kinck's pocket-book. It will be seen that without my accomplices — the instruments of an affair *which did not concern me* — I should not have killed a family which was, in fact, my milch cow. Now I have said all. If you do not believe me, so much the worse for you. If they do not take me to Alsace to prove the truth of what I say, it is because *they want not to know the truth.*"

I report this conversation *verbatim*. I give it for what it may be worth. If it is absurd, its absurdity is not without logic. It is not more inexplicable than the mysterious journey of Kinck and Tropmann into Alsace, or the rendezvous in Paris at night with Mme. Kinck and her children to which she readily consented.

To fathom these apparent absurdities we need the key to the mysteries that enfold, and always will enfold, the incomprehensible actions of the victims and their murderer. Tropmann was not such a fool as to expect that he could by his butchery obtain the money of the Kincks; why then destroy at one blow a family which was to him the layer of golden eggs?

Reflecting on the statements made to me by Tropmann, and remembering my former adventure in the Vosges, an adventure as unlikely as the assertions of this criminal, I ended by believing that he might have told me the truth.

This opinion was confirmed by the attitude taken by my chiefs when I reported to them, word for word, the conversation I had had with this monster. I was enjoined to say nothing about his "absurd statements," to keep them to myself, and to take out of my *procès-verbaux* all that related to politics and to the "pretended accomplices" of Tropmann.

On the 28th of December, 1869, Tropmann was arraigned before the court of assizes of the Seine. [It is not necessary to give the details of the trial which was so conducted as to set aside all evidence tending to show that Tropmann had accomplices. The gist of the defence offered by his counsel, the celebrated Maître Lachaud, was as follows. After recalling the points left obscure by the prosecution, and dwelling on the fact that no profit from his holocaust could have accrued to the murderer, Maître Lachaud said:]

"Let us now come to the question of accomplices.

The murder of the father might have been committed alone; the murder of Gustave might have been committed alone; but the killing of the rest of the family could not have been committed alone. It is impossible. I should say so even if I had no witnesses — but I have them; even if no one had seen those accomplices — but they were seen.

"What says the prosecution? Here we must examine closely. The prosecution says that Tropmann bought the spade and pickaxe at five o'clock; that he returned and took them away at eight o'clock; that he then took the omnibus to Pantin, dug the trench, returned to Paris, went to the Railway Hotel, found the Kinck family, put them into a carriage and went with them to the place indicated by the coachman Bardot. There he made the mother and two of the children get out; he took them across a field and killed them. He then returned for the other three children, took them and killed them. He then buried all their bodies, smoothed the earth carefully, and returned to Paris between five and six o'clock A. M. That is how, says the prosecution, the thing was done.

"Permit me to tell you, first, that time, actual time, is lacking. Second, that witnesses have given details which prove that Tropmann had accomplices.

"First, as to time. Tropmann bought the implements at five o'clock. He called for them at eight o'clock. Was it he who was seen to take the omnibus to Pantin? No one knows. If it was he, he must have taken it some minutes before nine. It reached the Four Roads cross-

way at nine. From there he had 750 yards to walk to the place where the trench was to be dug. And that trench — what were its dimensions? 10 feet long by 30 inches wide, and 20 inches deep. Can you tell me how long it would take a man to dig such a trench?

"Next: he returned to Paris, went to the Railway Hotel, found the Kinck family, put them into a carriage, and started again. What o'clock was it then? The coachman tells us it was fifty minutes past ten when they got into the carriage. Will you tell me how, in so short a time, he could have gone to the Langlois field, dug the grave, returned to Paris, and collected the Kinck family. Here the prosecution breaks down before a physical impossibility. When Tropmann says: 'I had accomplices; when I reached the place the trench was dug,' does not that commend itself to your minds as true?

"I continue: Tropmann takes the carriage at fifty minutes past ten. They drive to the corner of the Four Roads. From there to the spot where the trench is dug is 750 yards. He takes his first three victims there and kills them. Then he returns over the 750 yards for the other three victims. How long was he absent on that first trip? The coachman says twenty minutes. Is it possible that in twenty minutes he could have walked 1500 yards and killed three persons? If he had taken an hour, — three quarters of an hour even, — I might admit it, — but twenty minutes! it is an impossibility!

"Had this man herculean strength he could not do

impossibilities. He could not kill three persons in a moment so that none of them uttered a cry, none of them attempted to escape.

"Am I here to rehabilitate Tropmann? Is that my task? No! But I say to the prosecution: 'There were four murderers and you are trying only one of them. In God's name, in the name of law and justice, seek and you will find. Do not close the door to truth.'"

These words had no effect. The prosecution was carried on to the last in such a way that it was impossible for the jurors to see clearly into these crimes. The shades of Tropmann's accomplices passed before their eyes like the fugitive shadows of some invisible object.

Tropmann was found guilty of all the murders of the Kinck family and condemned to death. He was executed on the 19th of January, 1870. His last words to the excellent Abbé Croze were: "Be sure to tell Monsieur Claude that I persist."

I went to see Tropmann as soon as he was moved from the Conciergerie to the cells for the condemned at La Roquette and advised him to write down all that he had told me and send it to the *Procureur Général.* That evening, when I returned to his cell, he gave me a sealed letter which I immediately forwarded to my chiefs. It contained all that Tropmann had told me about the pocket-book. He described it as being of black leather, wrapped in a silk handkerchief with red squares, buried near Cernay. It contained, he said, the names of his accomplices. As the court had denied

the existence of those accomplices, the letter was considered a mere ruse to delay his last hour. No search was ordered.

Vexed at the fixed determination of the authorities, I took upon myself to bring Mme. D——, the keeper of the English tavern, to Tropmann's cell in La Roquette. She had seen him on the day after the murder conversing with the confederate whom he found dead at Havre. He was much moved when he saw her and promised to write to her and give her the names of his accomplices. He did not do so, and when I asked him why he did not keep his promise, he answered:

"For her sake. If they knew they were in her power, they would kill her."

Thus ended this mysterious affair. The truth of it was not sought and will never be known.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND THUNDERCLAP— VICTOR NOIR

TROPMANN had scarcely left the prison of the Conciergerie for the cells for the condemned of La Roquette when a prince of the Emperor's family entered it.

On the 10th of January, 1870, a young man staggered out of the half-opened door of a house at Auteuil, the residence of Prince Pierre Bonaparte. Immediately after him came another man, smaller and rather older than the first, waving his hat and crying out:

"There 's murder at Prince Pierre's!"

A concierge of the next house, named Fauch, saw the first young man fall as he crossed the roadway. Running to him, he lifted him, and carried him, by the help of a mason, to the shop of a neighbouring apothecary. There they unbuttoned his coat and found blood flowing from a small wound in the left breast. The death-rattle was then in his throat. The apothecary, seeing the gravity of the case, said:

"I can do nothing without a physician."

At this moment the second person who had come from the Prince's house entered the shop. The concierge recognized him, and said:

"Monsieur, why did you not help your friend?"

He answered, showing his torn overcoat, that he was wounded himself. He had scarcely uttered the words when a physician entered the shop. He came from the side of the street where a hackney-coach had been standing ever since the two wounded men had entered the Prince's house. The companion of the younger man, who now gave no signs of life, said to the physician:

"You do not know him. He is Victor Noir."

"Yes, it is he," replied the physician, shaking his head. "Or rather, it was he. Poor lad! It is all over! — only twenty years old!"

The companion of Victor Noir, killed by Prince Pierre Bonaparte, was Ulrich de Fonvielle. In the coach, which stood in the street during the interview between Fonvielle and Noir with the Prince, was Paschal Grousset, sub-editor of the *Marseillaise.* The physician who ran to the help of the dying man was not ignorant of the dreadful results of that interview, because Fonvielle had abandoned Victor Noir on leaving the house and had gone to the coach in which was Paschal Grousset before he went to the apothecary's. By that time Victor Noir was dead.

Two hours later all Paris knew that the youngest reporter of the democratic press had been killed by a Bonaparte. The news reached the Château and the faubourgs at the same time — the Château to take instant means to ward off this new thunderbolt; the faubourgs to put to profit that bolt, which, skilfully

directed, might fire all the powder-mines and blow up the Tuileries.

Before explaining what had brought Victor Noir and Fonvielle, openly, and Paschal Grousset, secretly, to Auteuil, I will quote, *verbatim*, the statement made by Fonvielle of the interview with the Prince, which ended in the death of Noir.

"On the 10th of January, 1870, we went, Victor Noir and I, to the house of Prince Pierre Bonaparte, 59, rue d'Auteuil. We were sent by M. Paschal Grousset to ask satisfaction from Prince Bonaparte for his insulting articles against M. Paschal Grousset, published in the *Avenir de la Corse* [Future of Corsica].

"We gave our cards to two servants. They showed us into a little parlour on the ground floor to the right. After a few minutes, they took us up to the first floor, through a guard-room, to a salon. A door opened and M. Pierre Bonaparte entered the room. We advanced towards him, and the following words were exchanged between us:

"'Monsieur, we come from M. Paschal Grousset to hand you this letter.'

"'Then you do not come from M. Henri Rochefort, and you are not of his crew?'

"'Monsieur, we come for another matter and I beg you to take cognizance of this letter.'

"I held the letter out to him. He took it and went to a window to read it. He read it. After crumpling it in his hand, he returned to us.

"'I have attacked M. Rochefort,' he said, 'because

he is the standard-bearer of debauchery. As for M. Grousset, I have no answer to give to him. Are you one with those carrion?'

"Victor Noir replied:

"'Monsieur, we are one with our friends.'

"Then, advancing quickly, the Prince gave Victor a blow on the face with his left hand, while with his right he pulled a revolver out of his pocket and fired at Noir, who sprang at the shot, put his hands to his breast, and plunged through the door by which we had entered.

"The murderer then rushed towards me and fired at me. I seized a pistol which I had in my pocket, and while I was trying to take it from its case, he sprang upon me; but when he saw that I was armed he recoiled, placed himself before the door, and aimed at me. Comprehending that if I fired, it would be said that we were the aggressors, I opened a door behind me and rushed out, crying: 'Murder!' As I left the room, a second shot went through my overcoat. I then found Victor Noir, who had gone down the staircase into the street and was dying."

Such was the statement of Ulrich de Fonvielle, in which no question is raised as to the attitude of Paschal Grousset's seconds towards their aggressor.

At the moment when the terrible news flew through Paris, the Emperor was returning from a hunt. He turned very pale on hearing it. He felt that the pistol of his imprudent cousin had struck him even more directly than it had struck its intended victim. He seemed

overwhelmed by this new thunderbolt. In spite of his phlegmatic nature, he could not hide his poignant emotions. He said to Émile Ollivier and to the Minister of the Interior:

"I approve of what you have done. No one of my family can be above the laws."

Prince Pierre, however, comprehending the gravity of his position, did not wait for the authorities to make him a prisoner. In vain did zealous Bonapartists rush to Auteuil to congratulate him on having "responded so well to the threats of the *canaille*." The Prince replied:

"Do not congratulate me; it is a frightful misfortune!"

And he went to the Conciergerie, accompanied by the commissary of police at Auteuil, and gave himself up.

The following is a brief statement of what led to that "frightful misfortune," as the Prince justly termed it.

A lively polemic was going on between the editor-in-chief of the *Revanche*, a liberal newspaper, published in Corsica, and the editor-in-chief of the *Avenir de la Corse*, a paper devoted to the imperial family. Prince Pierre, who had plenty of leisure, not being employed at the Château, used some of his idle hours in writing articles to the *Avenir de la Corse*, flagellating the adversaries of his family.

"Let us leave these *vitioli*," he wrote, "to the opprobrium of their treachery; and let me be permitted to recall the saying of an American diplomatist who, apropos of the *filth* that certain journals fling at the

Column, said that France herself, that great country, was better known in the universe through Napoleon than Napoleon was known through France. In spite of the snails crawling up the bronze of that column, tracking it with their slime, the glory of the great man can never be tarnished.

"Let Corsicans cease to trouble themselves about the alienations that the infamous pamphleteers of Bastia are striving to establish in our almost unanimous national sentiments — sentiments that have risen here to the level of a national religion.

"Let our dear Corsica be ever proud of its oneness with France and with her Elect.

"*Viva gli nostri!* P. N. BONAPARTE."

To this the editor of the *Revanche* replied:

"This Prince is not a Corsican. He stigmatizes as beggars and *vitioli* independent citizens who could give him lessons in patriotism.

"Prince, have you forgotten what you wrote to the citizens of Corsica in 1848, when, *more republican than ourselves*, you came to beg our suffrages because you saw in a republican government the means of making a fortune? Well, we note the extravagant threats of Pierre Napoleon Bonaparte and we leave to him his responsibility for them."

The *Marseillaise*, edited by Henri Rochefort, one of its sub-editors being Paschal Grousset, now took a hand in the matter. The quarrel grew venomous and assumed in Paris other proportions than those of a mere

Corsican and local dispute. Prince Pierre wrote to Rochefort:

"You insult me by the pens of your underlings. It is very natural. But my turn will come. If your breast is not armoured by your inkstand, if you consent to draw the bolts which render your honourable person inviolable, you will not find me in a palace or a castle. I live at 59, rue d'Auteuil, and I promise, if you come there, not to say that I am out. Awaiting your reply, I have the honour to salute you."

It was after this exchange of letters that Paschal Grousset sent Victor Noir and Fonvielle to demand satisfaction of Prince Pierre Bonaparte; Paschal Grousset himself awaiting the result of the interview in a hackney-coach!

The drama of Auteuil was the prologue of another drama, marked deep into the life of a people. That drama was the year 1870-1871: the year of war, of defeat, of invasion, of the Commune — L'Année Terrible.

That nothing might lessen the violence of the shock which the "irreconcilables" were preparing against the Château, the editor of the *Marseillaise* wrote and published at the head of his paper on the evening after the murder the following:

"I was weak enough to believe that a Bonaparte might be something else than a murderer.

"I rashly imagined that an honourable duel was possible with a member of that family in whom murder and stealthy traps are the tradition and the habit.

"Our collaborator, Paschal Grousset, shared my error;

HENRI ROCHEFORT

and to-day we mourn our poor, dear friend, Victor Noir, murdered by the bandit, Pierre Napoleon Bonaparte.

"For eighteen years now France has been in the bloody hands of these cut-throats and ruffians, who, not content with shooting down Republicans in the streets, draw them into vile traps to murder them.

"French people! do you not think there has been enough of this?

"HENRI ROCHEFORT."

A pistol-shot fired on the Boulevard des Capucines had decided the fall of Louis-Philippe's monarchy; a pistol-shot fired by a Bonaparte decided the fall of the Empire. Henri Rochefort picked up the ball that killed his lieutenant and fired it, in more deadly fashion, against a throne that had no longer any supporter but Émile Ollivier.

On the day of this catastrophe I was ordered to take steps against the hidden legions whose leaders were now making open war against the Empire. All the police were set to work at this call of the editor-in-chief of the *Marseillaise!* I sent them into the most dangerous quarters to maintain order and control the over-excited minds of the people. I own that I was greatly troubled by this terrible event. Did it not once more put in question a shaken power? a power whose head, ill with an incurable malady and without supporters, was at the mercy of events that daily grew more dangerous, more disquieting?

Having made my dispositions, I went to see Mme.

X——, because I knew that being the neighbour of Prince Pierre she could give me details about the drama at Auteuil of which I was ignorant.

Around the house of Prince Pierre I found a howling, hostile crowd, swearing to avenge a "child of the people murdered by a prince." The political police had no need to incite it to a sham revolution. Revolution in actual form was there. It might not conquer; it might again be conquered. But, in any case, it put the Empire more and more on its defensive until the day came for a final reckoning. It was with a wrung heart and an anxious mind that I made my way through that hostile crowd to the little house of Mme. X——.

As soon as she saw me, she said in an angry tone:

"Well, Orléanist, you ought to be satisfied! That pistol-shot brings your M. Thiers and his schemes to the fore."

I did not expect this attack.

"My dear friend," I said, "you judge me very harshly when great evils are threatening the Empire. At a moment when the Emperor is in need of every support I have come here to get the assistance of your information, your intelligence, and your energy."

"Forgive me if I have again misjudged you," she replied. "Your action is the more honourable because the Empire is *fichu*, *archi-fichu!* [done for]. Yes," she continued, walking up and down, and as if speaking to herself, "the Empire is lost! That *Prussienne*, who has so often lived in this very house, has completed

the work that Prussia, for ten years, has kept her here to do. The Emperor is not his own master in the Tuileries — or anywhere else! Surrounded by foreigners in his palace, surrounded by democracy in the heart of Paris, he will try in vain by a new plebiscite to force the universal suffrage of the peasantry in his favour — he can't do it! The foreigners have joined hands with our inside enemies to dislodge him from the Tuileries! Has n't he himself struck the first crow-bar into his house by admitting that Émile Ollivier, that Republican, into it? The Emperor is destroying himself — he is lost, I tell you. Why is he conspiring in the Tuileries precisely as he did at Ham? Because he no longer knows how to reign, now that he has lost his Morny, his Billault to govern him! Well, then, let him abdicate!"

"Do you really think," I asked, "that the Empire has come to that?"

Mme. X—— looked at me disdainfully.

"And are you simple enough," she retorted, — "*you*, who saw the revolution of 1848, — not to see that the situation to-day is precisely the same, only made worse by the Orléanists, who, behind M. Thiers, have joined with the Legitimists to stir up the most violent leaders of the lowest democracy?"

"Excuse me," I said, "I 'm nothing but a humble policeman. Living in a world of thieves and murderers, I do not possess your depth of view — "

"Pshaw!" interrupted Mme. X——, who was in a fit of temper; "enlarge that sphere of thieves and

murderers and you will have before your eyes the sphere of the political world."

"Another time," I said, "I should be glad to listen to your views and discuss them; but to-night I am on another errand in coming to see you."

"Speak, my friend, — I 'll listen," she said, sitting down at a table laden with papers, on which I saw the stamps of the Prefecture — those of the Division of the Political Police.

"You are the neighbour of Prince Pierre, and you must know how the affair which the Republicans are going to make a cause against the Emperor took place."

"Yes," she answered, pointing to a paper on which was written "Report on the Affair at Auteuil," "and I will satisfy you at once. First, I know you are too wise to take the testimony of that little Fonvielle to the letter."

"Of course not," I replied; "otherwise Prince Pierre would be a ferocious brute. But please explain to me exactly how the thing took place."

"Willingly," she said; "and the details I now give you I got from the Prince's servants. Of course you feel that Prince Pierre did not fire on Victor Noir until he had received provocation from him and from his companion. Now I am told that Victor Noir and Fonvielle were not the courteous envoys of Paschal Grousset that Fonvielle makes out. They were there to set a trap."

"Do you think the Prince's servants are more to be believed than Grousset's friends?"

"In any case," she replied, "the facts speak in favour of the Prince. Do seconds arrive in the house of a man, to whom they bring a challenge, armed to the teeth — like Fonvielle, who carried a sword-cane and a six-barrelled revolver?"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, much astonished, "Fonvielle's report says nothing of that."

"Neither does it mention the blow of Victor Noir's fist applied to the Prince's cheek, while Fonvielle, crouching behind an armchair, pulled out his pistol to return the shot that killed Victor Noir."

"If things happened thus," I said, "they must have been premeditated. But political passion will never see the Prince otherwise than as black as Paschal Grousset's friends make him out."

"No; and that's the misfortune of it. But, furthermore, what do you make of Paschal Grousset's presence in the street at Auteuil when he sends his seconds in with his challenge? How came a fourth personage, that physician, a friend of the three men, to be there as if by chance, in case too warm an explanation might end in some tragic manner? Prince Pierre's irascible nature is well known; it was only necessary to exasperate him to make him violent. That is my opinion of how and why the affair took place, and I have so stated it in my report to the Political Division."

While we were talking I could hear in the streets the threatening shouts of the multitude. As I made my way back through the furious crowd I heard threats of death, and saw sinister faces seen only in days of

revolution. Graybeards, and children with haggard faces, muttering what was doubtless a secret order:

"To-morrow the Chamber — then the Château!"

If these people had recognized me, they would probably have made an end of me then and there, as they did of several of my agents when Rochefort was arrested. Returning to the Prefecture, I took measures corresponding to the attitude of the crowd and the magnitude of the situation. The article in the *Marseillaise* announcing the death of Victor Noir was a call to insurrection. A Liberal deputy rushed to the Legislative Chamber and demanded "justice for the death of a child of the people." The next morning all the "hundreds" of Belleville, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the rue du Temple rose as one man. Each centurion led his company, all "avengers of the child of the people," to Neuilly, where the body of Victor Noir had been carried.

Happily for the Empire, a communication from Blanqui was circulated among the centurions the night before the funeral. It said:

"Beware of foreign agents and spies."

This notice destroyed the unity of action which had grouped together the "sections" of Paris, London, and the Central Committee of the Place de la Corderie.

Meantime the Château was taking the most energetic measures. We were ordered to line the roads to Neuilly with police agents in civilian clothes and uniforms. The army was brought in from Versailles, the troops camping on the Champs de Mars. Cannon protected

the Chamber where a Minister of the Empire drawn from the ranks of the Liberals said to the Opposition;

"We are moderation itself, *but*, if need be, we shall become force."

On the evening of Victor Noir's burial, the Chamber was protected, inside and out, by a regiment of the voltigeurs of the guard, with sentinels posted on the Pont de la Concorde. A squadron of police guarded the head of the bridge. At five o'clock, the vanguard of the revolutionary people, returning from the funeral to invade the Chamber, encountered this squadron, behind which pawed the horses of the guard, while through the bayonets could be seen the cannon, ready to pour shells among the populace bent on "avenging its child."

Confronted with this spectacle the vanguard disbanded. The revolution did not take place that day. But from that day revolutionary Paris "felt its elbows," marching together in close ranks. The Empire held by a thread, — a thread which it broke itself, when, to escape revolution, it declared war, only to fall by invasion.

At the time of the murder, Prince Pierre Bonaparte, who had been ill, was convalescent. Given the cold shoulder at the Château since making a plebeian marriage, he was almost proscribed by his august family. This son of Lucien, after leading throughout the world a life of adventure — carbonaro in Italy, trapper in the wild West, playing as readily with dagger and revolver as he did on his guitar, — he had ended, now that he was reaching old age, in a life of absolute retirement. He

desired only to live forgotten at Auteuil, where he devoted himself to works of literature and science.

It was not his wish to enter the political struggle, but the Corsican newspapers of the Opposition pursued him into the peaceful retreat he had chosen like his father Lucien. It was not his fault if an ambitious Corsican forced him to reënter the lists by attacking his name and family. Then it was that Victor Noir, an *enfant terrible*, was made to take part in the affair, and as ill luck would have it, the most honest of the Bonapartes committed a criminal act against a Parisian *gamin*, who saw in the affair nothing but a fine chance to carry a real challenge to a prince.

Victor Noir belonged to the battalion of young democratic journalists under the orders of the most influential of its members. He began as a political reporter. No one seeing that tall, strong fellow, with a baby face, rosy as a doll, with smiling, sensual lips, saucy nose, cheeks like a pippin apple, and little Chinese eyes, from which darted a lively, roguish glance — no one, I say, seeing that round, young head on its good-natured, giant body, would have supposed him to be the writer of those terrible *Nouvelles à la main*, which were far more disagreeable to the authorities than a riot in the streets.

When his superiors singled him out to go to Auteuil with Ulrich de Fonvielle, he exclaimed, with his *gamin* laugh:

"I, Victor Noir, second in a duel with a prince! That 's *chic* enough, is n't it?"

And before getting into the coach to go to Auteuil,

he walked up the Boulevard Montmartre, saying, in the Café de Madrid and the Café de Suède:

"I am ordered to carry a challenge from Grousset to a Bonaparte. I, who am just on the eve of being married. Have n't I luck? Why, it is like having two weddings!"

And this great child, the joy of the boulevards in his long ulster, his immense grey hat with its broad brim and its hairy surface, appeared that morning dressed as a "gentleman" of the highest style in order worthily to represent his chief when demanding from Prince Pierre the reparation of a duel.

The affair will always remain a mystery. The police could only unveil, imperfectly, a portion of it. True is it that under the Empire we were forever made to walk in darkness.

I leave to the reader the task of disengaging the truth from the report of Fonvielle and the report of Mme. X——. Both reports, in my opinion, are partisan. But it may be said that in this fatal affair between a young reporter, who did not know the Prince any more than the Prince knew him, if there was no trap laid, there was, at any rate, the hand of destiny.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WAR

I HAVE not the presumption, humble chief of police that I am, to write the history of the late reign. But, while keeping to my own sphere, I wish to relate that which I have seen, learned, and heard during my long career. I owe to my readers the numerous notes that I made, or gathered, as much on the steps of the throne as in the lowest purlieus of society. The conversation I am about to relate cannot be called in question, because it was given out, after the death of Napoleon III, by him who had the honour to share it.

Ten days before the declaration of war with Prussia, the Emperor was at Saint-Cloud, talking *tête-à-tête* with a Councillor of State, an old friend whom he had known at Ham, one of the most faithful supporters of imperial authority.

It was ten o'clock in the morning. Though the month was July, the Emperor, who suffered from nervous chills — spasms occasioned by his incurable malady — had a fire in the room. He thanked the Councillor for sending him one of his works concerning the history of his reign. Seated beside the fire, his face impassible,

NAPOLEON III

the eternal cigarette between his lips, he listened to this confidant of the prosperous and authoritative days of his reign. The latter held, as nearly as possible, this language:

"What I notice in the new era of the Empire and the parliamentary régime is the hesitation, the confusion it impresses on the direction of affairs. The public mind, pleased, as Your Majesty says, with the return to liberalism, is nevertheless perplexed and disconcerted by the Emperor's *apparent* abandonment of the direction of the government. The helm seems left to itself, or abandoned to incompetent pilots who let the ship float at random. All is in deplorable confusion. The public knows what the Opposition wants, but it no longer knows what your policy wants, while that policy, nevertheless, *seems* to express the same ideas as the Opposition."

"You are right," replied the Emperor; "that is precisely the situation in which France finds herself now that the Opposition persists in hampering the advance of progress such as I had dreamed for her."

"If that is so, Majesty, change your ministry."

"But it is not going badly at the present moment!" cried the Emperor, smiling.

"Just so," replied the Councillor of State; "because it is delivering you over to the power of the 'faithless ones'!"

"But Government," retorted the Emperor, designedly stirring up his Councillor, "ought not to be exclusive; it ought not to repulse those who approach it."

"True," said the Councillor, "there again I recognize imperial magnanimity, which welcomes all who want to serve it, no matter from what side they come."

"Unfortunately," said the Emperor, "they come only from the side of my enemies. For instance, in my own headquarters how many Bonapartists can you find me? Look for them even among those who formerly served me well. Saint-Arnaud and Morny were Orléanists; King Jerome belongs to anybody; my cousin remains a Jacobin; the Empress is a Catholic. I don't see any one but Persigny, my faithful Persigny, who is a Bonapartist — and he is an imbecile!"

"At least, Majesty," answered the Councillor, pursing his lips, "those you name are, or were, good servants who were not discouraged, who were not forced out by this introduction of liberals. To-day, you not only discourage your most devoted servants by giving them over to the Opposition, but you are teaching France that the only way to success is through an Opposition that is weakening the Empire."

"It is not my fault," replied the Emperor, lowering his head in a dreamy way, "if men are lacking." Then, looking up at his Councillor, he added: "Assuredly, if I had more advisers like you, my dear friend, the situation would not be so bad; you are the wood of which senators should be made."

"I am deeply grateful to Your Majesty for your good will to me," replied the Councillor, who was anxious to get round to the object of his visit, namely, to discuss with the Emperor the subject of the war of

which the latter had been dreaming since his last plebiscite; "but it was not to talk senate, or even politics, that I asked for the honour of an interview. It was for a far more serious and confidential question."

"What is it?" cried the Emperor, who suspected what this friend of his early years was about to say.

"I wish," he replied, "to speak of the King of Prussia, whose arrogant ambition seems to me intolerable. I have tried to develop my thoughts in a pamphlet, which I have so far kept secret from every one except Your Majesty and Marshal Lebœuf. Until now Your Majesty has always said to me: 'Wait!'— I have waited. I now come again to take the opinion of my sovereign."

The Emperor had granted this secret audience for the very purpose of putting his confidant on this topic; he therefore hastened to say:

"I know that Prussia is a most implacable enemy to France. I am as sure of it as you are. But to declare war we must have a twenty-fold good reason; our moral power depends on that."

"Ah, sire!" exclaimed the Councillor, "you have had a two hundred-fold reason since 1866, and occasion will not be wanting to supply you with a serious grievance. Prussia is not sparing of them."

"Would you dare publish what you say if I gave you permission and if your publisher would keep the secret of your authorship?"

"There is my publication," said the Councillor of

State, drawing a pamphlet from his pocket. "It is not yet deposited at the Ministry of the Interior."

This pamphlet which Napoleon took from the Councillor's hand was entitled: "Prussia and the Rhine."

"You want the Rhine?" said Napoleon, after turning over the leaves for a time with a pensive air.

"Yes, sire, with ardour! It is our natural, our necessary frontier. It is the indispensable consecration of the glory of France, and the glory of your own reign."

"Yes, yes," said Napoleon, shaking his head; "but it must be *done*, not talked about."

"For you, sire, that reserve is obligatory; but for us it is a duty to tell this truth. I believe I serve my country best by pointing out, as I do here" (motioning to the pamphlet), "the object that France ought logically to pursue."

The Councillor waited till the Emperor had read through the pamphlet, afterwards so famous. Then he took his leave. The Emperor pressed his hand affectionately, uttering thus the words he dared not say, because the walls of even Saint-Cloud had ears. They had them that day so effectively that a servant of the Emperor's household took down the interview and consigned his report to a henchman of the Prussian *Chancellerie*. That it never reached Berlin was due to the fact that the messenger was killed at Ville d'Avray, and the papers were found on his body.

Ten days after this interview war was declared. The declaration, coming when it did, took the King of Prussia, Bismarck, and Moltke by surprise, although

they had so long done all in their power to provoke it. Was the affront offered to the French Ambassador at Ems imaginary? Did M. Benedetti receive, yes or no, that box on his ear? This the Opposition was never able to fathom. No matter, it served its purpose; an insult offered to French honour roused the nation.

The Emperor knew well that war was the last means that remained to him of escaping revolution; also it would enable him to take vengeance on Prussia, which had spared him no affront since 1866. He attained his aim for the time being. By declaring war, he circumvented the revolutionaries, already on the way to the Tuileries to dislodge him; he roused all France, which, forgetting Sadowa and Bismarck, now thought only of the insult offered at Ems to her ambassador! France is always chivalrous. Napoleon worked upon her noblest sentiments to rouse the nation and save his falling power.

As for me, it was not without deep sadness that I saw how, on the declaration of war, my chiefs, in accord with the Government agents, understood and promoted the warlike demonstrations of the population of Paris.

"To Berlin! To Berlin!" shouted squadrons of my own agents, goading on a populace whose leaders had often been arrested and haled to prison by those very agents. Did I not see my special man, Bagasse, with a tricolour cockade on his hat, singing chorus in the faubourgs to the riff-raff! Did I not meet Mme. X——, in a tricolour gown, promenading the boulevards

crying out with girls from the Café de Madrid: "On to Berlin! To Berlin!"

The newspapers of the Palais-Royal, of which Émile de Girardin was the great prophet, never ceased to shout: "Confidence! confidence!"

The populace, trusting to writers of military plays for the circus, still believed France invincible. Always crazily patriotic, as light-minded as they are generous, they sincerely pitied those "louts of Prussians," who were about to be devoured by our army.

When certain members of the Opposition, whose remonstrances had been choked off in the Chamber, organized, in the Latin quarter, a demonstration in favour of peace, orders were issued from the Prefecture to disperse that "anarchical and anti-French cohort." I met those men six months later. They formed, after our disasters, new battalions of the army improvised for the national defence. They held the sword of stricken France, those honoured martyrs whom the Empire could not deceive.

As for me, who saw very close this despicable comedy, I was determined not to be mixed up in a machination started by the Ministers and worked up by the agents of the new plebiscite. I asked the Ministry to send me in charge of the Emperor's baggage-train to Metz. As the police were expected to play a certain rôle in the war, my request was warmly granted.

The Emperor and the Prince Imperial left Paris on the morning of July 29, 1870, in a special train composed of several state carriages and numerous cars

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL

loaded with the imperial baggage. The Emperor wore the uniform of a general of division; the Prince Imperial that of a sub-lieutenant.

I was, as I have said, a part of that military pageant, charged with watching over the preservation and security of the imperial train. I had brought with me, under orders from the Prefecture, my best, tried men, all old soldiers, who, while acting as police in camp, would remember their past calling and take arms when necessary. There were over a score of them, among whom I shall here name Bagasse, the *Requin* [the Shark], and *Œil de Lynx* [Lynx-Eye].

I saw the Emperor and his son very closely as they got into their carriage, and started for a war full of the most terrible vicissitudes recorded in history. The lad was gay, careless, almost joyous, as children of that age are wont to be. The old man was taciturn and dreamy. When the steam-whistle sounded and the vapour puffed into the air, I saw his impassible face contract as if the sinister chuckle of that vapour had irritated his nerves. What thought he as that train started? Did he think that he was going to disaster? that he was taking his son to exile — that boy so unconscious of danger, who, during his short life, was to know nothing of war but defeat, of grandeur but the heroism of death!

Napoleon II died to expiate the ambition of Napoleon I; Napoleon IV died to expiate the ambition, the ill-omened ambition, of Napoleon III. And these two children succumbed to fate in exile on foreign soil where their fathers left them!

Those who were near the Emperor as the imperial train drew out of Paris remembered afterwards the fixed look that he laid on the city from which he was departing.

The Empress on the previous evening had taken her son to the Invalides to kneel before the tomb of the victor of Jena. As mother and son left the building the military band played as they passed the *Chant du Dépari.* One of my agents mingling in the crowd heard a soldier murmur to himself:

"The *Chant du Dépari* — it is the swan's song!"

The soldiers themselves, who at this time joined their regiments and marched to the Eastern Railway station, seemed to have a consciousness of disaster. They were gloomy. Their officers shared their sadness as soon as they were no longer intoxicated by the enthusiasm of the boulevards, where police and populace were still shouting: "To Berlin! To Berlin!"

When we reached Metz, the blind confidence the Emperor had placed in Marshal Lebœuf melted away before the crushing reality. France, which was entering this war with light heart and heedless mind, had neither soldiers nor officers ready for it. Instead of 500,000 men, she could muster only 250,000, because the military funds had been squandered; because ministers and sovereigns had gone to the bottom of the army appropriation; because, since Sadowa, military France, ruined by the speculation of the Mexican war, had only a weak army to fight against a million of Prussian soldiers!

I saw that army closely while I was with the Emperor's headquarters. All the commanders of corps, without concerning themselves about the unity of military operations, thought only of turning, each to his own profit, some partial victory, that he might, individually, have the honours of war. They were jealous of one another. Alas! they need not have quarrelled in advance about the credit of victory, for they were all going straight to Sedan! They themselves helped on that result, for most of our generals went to the frontier as if they were going to a review at Longchamps, or to a camp at Saint-Maur.

At Metz we all saw that which, *at last*, reached the mind of the Emperor, as it had been all along in the wise judgement of men like M. Thiers, but which, apparently, had never entered the specialist brain of an artilleryman like Marshal Lebœuf.

We thought ourselves ready, and we were not! No organization, no plan, no resources, disorder everywhere; waste and carelessness everywhere. Confusion reigned in all branches of the administration; officers went about in search of their regiments; the men of the reserve, trying to join their missing corps, made, as one might say, the tour of France before reaching their destination.

Marshal McMahon, returning suddenly from Africa into the midst of this confusion, cried out in despair: "We are lost!"

Napoleon was terrified. His impassibility was shaken in presence of the awful spectacle which foretold the

ruin of the Empire and the condemnation of his own life.

I and my men were so placed in the front ranks that we could see behind the scenes of this theatre of war. I can say with certainty that Napoleon, at the sight of this grievous scene, was seized several times with a species of vertigo; he would stand for an instant as if stupefied, his eyes fixed, his mouth dumb because its paralyzed tongue could make no sound. He was seen to weep! The generals around him were forced to take him out of sight that the army might not see that he was weeping!

During this time I was receiving letters from Paris. The absolute confidence of the Parisians saddened me still more. The newspapers were saying:

"Why are they waiting? What are they doing? Will our victorious armies be ready for the fêtes in August?"

What they were doing, *I saw*. They were organizing on the spot, at the last instant. The confusion was so great that one regiment went off without a surgeon, which made a medical officer in Metz say: "The wounded will have to blow out their brains."

It is not for me to speak of the war in its details; I have to relate only what is personal to myself, what I saw, and what came within the scope of my duties.

After the defeat at Forbach, where the French soldiers fought like lions led by officers who, to use the term applied to them by the Prussians, were asses, it became necessary to beat our first retreat. My mission as a military policeman now began. The frontier of

France lay open to the enemy. Not a mile of that ground, not a town nor a village nor a hamlet was unknown to German soldiers who for ten years past had surveyed and mapped the region, and who now returned in uniforms to the places where they had lived and dressed as peasants.

The night after the bloody advantage obtained by the Prussians at Wissembourg, I was ordered, I and my agents in charge of the imperial train, to withdraw with the baggage-cars of His Majesty towards Metz. Before relating the incidents of this retreat, I wish to say a few words on this war in Alsace, which, to my thinking, had been morally won by Prussia in the interval since 1866. I have already given, in two criminal cases, facts which prove the truth of my assertion, namely, that if the Prussians entered Alsace in 1870 with ease, and as if it were their own region, they owed it to a plan long laid, like the war itself, which was to be the crowning work of the chancellor—Bismarck.

I have, moreover, the proof of this in a letter from a general, who, in 1866, warned General Trochu of the mole-work going on in that region. Here follows an extract from that letter addressed to General Trochu by the general then commanding at Strasbourg. [It is written as friend to friend, and uses the *tutoiement.*] This letter was furnished to me from the *cabinet noir:*

"As you are in the way to tell sound truth to the illustrious personages who surround you, tell them this: While we are pompously and lengthily deliberating on how to make ourselves an army, Prussia is

very actively preparing to invade our territory. She will be ready to put 600,000 men and 1200 cannon in the field before we have even thought of organizing the indispensable *cadres* for an army of 300,000 and 600 cannon. On the other side of the Rhine there is not a German who does not believe in war *in the near future.* The most pacific (those who through their connections are most French) consider war inevitable, and cannot understand our inaction.

"As a cause must be found for everything, they say that the Emperor has fallen into second childhood. Short of being blind, it is impossible not to see that war must break out in a very short time.

"With our stupid vanity, our crazy presumption, we believe that we can choose our own day and hour for completing our organization and our armament! In fact, my dear Trochu, I am of your opinion, and I am beginning to think that our Government is struck with lunacy. If Jupiter has decided to destroy it, don't let us forget, you and me, that the destinies of the country are bound up with ours, and, if we are not yet struck with that fatal lunacy, we ought to exert all our efforts to stop the downward trend which is leading straight to precipices.

"Here is a new detail to which I call your attention, because it is of a nature to open the eyes of the least clear-sighted.

"For some time past numerous Prussian agents roam about our frontier departments, especially the region between the Moselle and the Vosges. They sound the

minds of the population, they act upon the Protestants, who are numerous in those parts and are *much less French* than is usually supposed.

"This part of the population remains what it was in 1815, when it sent deputations to the enemy's headquarters, asking that Alsace be returned to the 'German fatherland.' It is well to note this fact; for it may justly be considered to throw light on the plans and the campaign of the enemy . . ."

Well, that letter, written confidentially by the Commandant of Strasbourg at the period of the Paris Exposition of 1866, when Prussia was busy at her work of espionage from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Seine, that letter, known to the Emperor and the Government because it was sent to the *cabinet noir*, was not taken as a warning by the illustrious personages of the Empire.

To return now to the disastrous campaign of 1870.

From the beginning of the retreat, after Wissembourg and Forbach, all was for me, as for others, an uninterrupted series of alarms and perils. I, with my agents, was constantly on the railroad, retreating from station to station for the safety of His Majesty's baggage. The enemy advanced, day by day; every place we left was at once filled by an army of German engineers, seizing each station and putting up the telegraph poles of our lines, now become Prussian lines. Each French train that had not had time to escape fell a prey to the enemy.

I had noticed, at the beginning of the campaign,

a soldier on the imperial train belonging to the escort. He was an Alsatian, the sly expression of whose crafty face told me nothing good of him. Though he was very zealous, very quick in executing all orders that I received from the staff, I distrusted him. When I spoke of my doubts to a high officer very close to the Emperor, he assured me I was quite mistaken in distrusting the man, who had been attached for ten years to the palace of Saint-Cloud and had proved himself a most honest and faithful servant of the imperial family.

In spite of this assurance, I continued to watch the man, and after the defeat at Wissembourg I changed the guard of the train, confiding it wholly to Bagasse and his police squad. Whether from vexation at this removal, or treachery, the faithful Alsatian disappeared after the defeat at Wissembourg, much to the surprise of those who had known him at Saint-Cloud.

After Wissembourg, as I have said, our generals could not hesitate; the frontier must be abandoned in order, as they called it, to "concentrate." By direction of the Emperor's staff, I ordered the engineer of the train to get up steam to save His Majesty's baggage, the enemy advancing upon us with giant strides.

The train consisted of thirty cars containing state carriages (intended for the entry into Berlin), beds, bedding, china, glass, furniture, draperies, and a great variety of other articles personal to His Majesty, including his cash-box. My one thought was to save that box. It must be saved at the peril of my life. That Alsatian servant knew of it, and I felt persuaded that before

reaching Metz our train would meet with some obstruction from the enemy.

Never shall I forget that sad and hopeless evening. All along the banks of the railroad lay the bodies of turcos and zouaves, dead and wounded together. Blood was soaking the roadway, cut up by balls and shells. When I gave the order to start, our army was quitting its position, leaving the dead and wounded in the station!

The whistle of the engine had scarcely sounded, the train was just beginning to get in motion, when a band of Uhlans galloped into the station. Their leader, at the risk of his life, rode straight to the head of the train and ordered the engineer to stop. Then he turned and called me by name.

He was the old and faithful servant of Saint-Cloud! After his soldiers had surrounded the train, he came to me and said with a courteous air, offering to take my hand, which I refused to him:

"Monsieur Claude, surrender; you are my prisoner. You are on German territory, and this train is ours. Surrender willingly if you do not wish to share the fate of others."

I was surrounded — surprised — captured! and by a German who had lived on the favours and benefits of France! We were taken, a party of resolute men, before we had fought! All around us lay the dead and dying, and we — healthy, living — must we surrender to these heavy Germans without imitating those martyrs, without at least attempting to fight for our country?

But the Uhlan leader had scarcely ceased speaking

when a shot was fired. It came from the railway bank where lay a wounded zouave. That hero, before dying, spent his last ball on the Prussian as if to show *us* our duty! He had aimed so well that the bullet struck the Uhlan leader full in the breast. As he fell, the old, wounded zouave cried out from the bank:

"Make haste! save yourselves! you are ten minutes ahead of the Germans."

"*Vive la France!* fire!" cried Bagasse to his comrades, and instantly volleys were exchanged between my men and the Uhlans. The latter attempted to board the train, but most of them fell on the rails, wounded by the rain of balls that poured from every compartment.

The engineer had understood Bagasse. He obeyed the shout of the old zouave by putting on all steam. The engine jostled, crushed, buffeted, and rammed down men and horses, while those who clung to the sides of the cars, fell back, struck by balls, wounded by bayonets, and were crushed by the wheels.

It was a horrible sight! But the train went swiftly on.

When I had recovered from the keen emotion caused by these horrors, I said to Bagasse, who was stroking the still hot barrel of his gun:

"Well, we played a big game!"

"And *won*, Monsieur Claude; that's the principal thing," replied Bagasse, twirling his moustache.

"That is to say," I remarked, "we have won the first game, but the enemy is close at our heels."

"Pooh!" cried Bagasse, "we won't let him surprise us again."

I did not share his blind confidence. I was convinced that the enemy would not let go a prize of which they knew the value through their spy. I had but a score of men with me, very resolute men, to be sure, and a million was well worth risking another hecatomb.

My eyes ached, as we went along, with the strain of gazing at the horizon, and with watching each roll of the ground. In every wood, every forest, I fancied I could see the tip of a lance or the muzzle of a musket.

Once at the little way-station of Panche, where we had to wait twenty minutes while they watered and fed the engine, I walked along the track for a little distance, taking Lynx-Eye with me. The road, running between sandy fields, was bordered by gorse, low shrubs, and ferns. Lynx-Eye crept along like a wild animal at a little distance from me studying the ground. Suddenly he made me a sign. Creeping towards him, he showed me on an old road near a little wood branches of trees fastened together in the form of a cross. It was evidently a signal.

Since our fight on the rails, and thanks to the rapidity of our train, no enemy had overtaken or preceded us. Evidently persons stationed along the road were signalling our passage to the Prussians behind us. Lynx-Eye left me in no doubt of this. Forcing me not to raise my head above the level of a little hedge, he showed me, among a group of trees, a man, a Prussian, standing motionless as a statue with his eyes fixed on

the railroad track where the long line of the imperial baggage-train was waiting.

The sentinel suddenly turned. Laying down his gun he took up a stick on which was fastened a handkerchief and looked in the opposite direction, as if prepared to make some signal. Quick as lightning, agile as a panther, subtle as a snake, Lynx-Eye sprang upon him with his sabre-bayonet. With a sure hand he drove the weapon in between the shoulders before the man could turn or give a cry. He fell dead among the underbrush.

Taking the Prussian's gun Lynx-Eye returned to me, throwing down as he came the branches arranged as a cross.

"Now, Monsieur Claude," he said, "let us go on. The Prussian army may come, but its sentinel has deserted; he has taken a passport to another country."

The joyous air of my agent wrung my heart. Hatred of crime may have made me from duty and from temperament inexorable to hardened sinners; but this Prussian soldier might have been the worthy father of a family. Of what was he guilty? Of doing his duty! Ah! war is a terrible thing! Men degenerate on both sides into savages and cannibals!

I was not delivered from these thoughts till our train rolled into Metz.

The Emperor, who had not waited for his baggage, had already returned to Metz. He now ordered me to be complimented on the "skilful and heroic" manner in which I had saved his property. When all the details

of the odyssey of my little troop became known, it actually seemed as if some of the officers would make me an ovation and carry me in triumph! For having saved the money-box and furniture of Napoleon III they made as much of a chief of police as they could have made of a marshal of the army who had saved France! Sad symptom of decadence!

It was now the 14th of August. The Emperor, after receiving old General Changarnier, who came rather late to offer his services, decided to leave Metz and return to Chalons. He was followed by his baggage-train, still under my care.

But I had had enough of this campaign in which I had seen nothing but frightful disasters. I was heart-sick at the sight of our poor soldiers, filling the stations, obstructing the roads—tattered turcos, maimed and crippled cuirassiers dragging their great twisted sabres, giants overthrown by numbers! Napoleon, with his baggage, followed these fugitives, abandoning Metz when the fighting was about to begin. He had nearly reached Verdun, when a shell coming from a Prussian battery hidden in a wood saluted him with its explosion. I was there again to save his baggage, though this time I had not my escort of soldier-policemen.

Taken in flank, pressed closer and closer by the enemy, Napoleon III ended at Verdun by throwing himself into a third-class carriage in which he reached Châlons incognito. From there he telegraphed to the Empress:

"I have no news of McMahon. The reconnoitrings

on the Sarre *show no movement of the enemy.* I hear there has been an engagement on the side of General Frossard. It is too far for us to go there. As soon as I receive news, I will send it to you. — NAPOLEON."

When he wrote those lines, the Emperor was shedding tears of blood. He had quitted Metz because it was on the point of being invested by the Prussians. Why then this new lie when all was desperate?

Because France lives on illusions!

Because the irremediable defeat, if known to Frenchmen, to Parisians, would have caused the instant loss of a throne, which the Empress, above all desired ardently to preserve for her son.

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER DEFEAT — THE POLITICAL GHOSTS

I QUITTED the imperial escort at Verdun, whence the Emperor was fleeing to Châlons, while Bazaine, face to face with the Prussians, thought less of repulsing them than of shutting himself up in Metz, to save the last legions of the Empire. My mission was over. I left the Emperor, resembling a desperate and feverish gambler who loses and loses again, still hoping to weary fatality. He left Verdun with one eye on the frontier of Alsace, now lost to him forever; the other on the capital he could scarcely hope to see again. He had sent his son by way of Mézières.

Travelling alone from Metz to Verdun, from Verdun to Châlons the Emperor still commanded. He commanded at Metz by Bazaine, who saved his last troops; he commanded in Paris by the Comte de Palikao, who, after our disasters, was far more concerned in defending himself against the Parisians than in defending France against the Prussians.

I left at Verdun the escort of my agents, all old soldiers who had resumed their muskets and now did not quit headquarters; some to work, if possible, for

the junction of Bazaine's army with the new army under McMahon; others to continue to defend the baggage-train of His Majesty, which bore in truth the whole of Cæsar's fortune. The leaders of the latter, Bagasse and the *Requin*, were to keep me informed, almost daily, of all that happened.

My mission was ended. I had only to return to Paris and resume my administrative functions in the service of a dying government which it was my duty to serve so long as it existed among its ruins. I left Verdun for Paris, accompanied by Lynx-Eye, who, less of a soldier than Bagasse and the *Requin*, was far more valuable to me at the Prefecture than he could have been on a battle-field.

On the road from Verdun we found, all the way, a stream of wretched soldiers, crippled, wounded, begging, who were making, without orders, without leaders, a further retreat to Châlons. Never was any unexpected defeat followed by such confusion and total want of discipline. Our soldiers, broken down by fatigue even more than by defeat, without rations, abandoned by their officers, had nought but bitterness in their hearts and curses on their lips. They robbed to live. Their behaviour was such that the population, terrified, fled at their approach. When we arrived, Lynx-Eye and I, at the gates of Châlons, we were stopped by two soldiers who demanded our money or our lives!

Yet at that very moment the Prefect of Verdun was telegraphing to the Minister of the Interior in Paris:

"We heard yesterday (August 16) the growling of cannon between Metz and Verdun. Persons arriving from that direction say that a great battle began at daybreak, also that the Prussians lost over 40,000 men in the battle of the previous evening. They fought to the very environs of Verdun, and the enemy has been seen making his retreat to the southward."

The Minister of War on his side made known this news to the Chamber, adding the following hardly less comforting information:

"It is not, properly speaking, a defeat which the Prussian army has met with before Metz, but a *considerable check*. I have not the official dispatches, and I cannot therefore enter into details; I can only say that the enemy has met with *successive checks*, and that they are retreating upon Commercy."

Was it permissible thus to abuse the credulity of France when at any moment the truth, the horrible, heart-breaking truth, might become known? To put to sleep still further the quivering, anxious, breathless population, the same Minister murmured in the corridor of the Chamber of Deputies in a way to be overheard by his most dangerous opponents:

"Ah! if all were known that *I know*, Paris would be illuminated!"

The Empire was to fall by that on which it had lived — deception.

When I reëntered Paris towards the last of August, I was frightened at the blind confidence of the Parisians who believed in a turn of fortune that existed

only in the self-interested minds of the supporters of the Government. I went immediately to the Prefecture of Police to make my report and render an account of what I had seen, — seen with my own eyes, — which agreed not at all with the false dispatches of the Minister of War.

At the Prefecture I found men evidently anxious, and yet my chiefs would hardly listen to me. They told me that such news did not concern them, they concerned the Minister of War. I went to the Ministry of War. I found there as elsewhere the same confusion, the same disorder, the same anxiety. When I explained the desperate situation of the army they answered me:

"If we only had troops to control the people when Paris knows all! But we have not! We have not a single general here on whom we can depend. General Trochu is watching us. That is why he came back from Châlons, by the advice of the Opposition, to watch the Empress!"

At the Ministry of War, at the Prefecture of Police, in all the public offices, they were thinking more of saving the Empire and themselves than of saving the country in danger!

I had no sooner resumed my functions than I felt myself surrounded by a vast void. I received no orders from my chiefs. Commissaries of police, officers of the force came to receive instructions which were not given. For me, as for them, the nearer the final defeat approached, the more the Prefect was "busy," the head of

the municipal police "received no one"; the Chief of the Political Police "could not be disturbed because he was working day and night with the Prefect."

At what were they working while the Empress-Regent, coming in from Saint Cloud to the Tuileries, saw fewer and yet fewer of her servitors around her? The Prefect of Police and the chiefs of his bureau were working at burning the papers that were most compromising for the adherents of the Empire. The thread of blue vapour that rose from the chimneys of the Prefecture in those August days told the tale of their serious and feverish occupations.

According as the level of the imperial power dropped by degrees in the irritated public mind, so its adversaries of old date rose higher and higher by several cubits. Mégy, the conspirator of La Villette, was cheered by the lawyers of the liberal party in the High Court of Justice when he left Blois to be transferred to the prison of the Cherchemidi; Mégy, on the eve of being tried for having attempted to overthrow the Government, arms in hand, was considered to be a martyr!

Rochefort was serving his sentence without rigour—a sentence for having, under Blanqui's direction, instigated civil war after the death of Victor Noir. While awaiting the moment when the gates of his prison should be opened for him, Rochefort was fraternizing with the director of the prison at suppers where the black bread of convicts did not figure! When my agents from habit notified me of the way in which the prison authorities were treating "the politicals," I received

orders to shut my eyes, and let things take their course.

I own that as for Rochefort, whom I had known in better days when we both frequented the theatres, he as a reporter on the *Figaro*, and I under the mask of Monsieur Auguste, a retired clerk, I own that I was glad of the order to shut my eyes as to the way his amiable gaolers treated him. I had known Rochefort when he was a jovial, witty jester, and his infernal situation had troubled me.

Each day, which was in fact one day the less for the Empire, I felt more and more isolated at the Prefecture. I foresaw that the moment was coming when the news of a defeat, however mitigated it might be by passing through the Tuileries and the Ministry of War, would lead to the invasion of all the public offices by the people. I expected it and I was resigned to it.

The one thing that consoled me in the unspeakable abandonment that surrounded me was the sight of the flag still waving from the dome of the Tuileries. "At least," I said to myself, "the Empress is faithful to France. She is at her post when all the others abandon theirs!"

I was under the weight of these reflections when I received, at my own house, Avenue Victoria, a note, the handwriting on which was well known to me. The note was from M. Thiers. He reminded me in a few words of the promise I had made him some years earlier. He warned me that the moment was approaching when I must burn what I had obeyed, and obey,

for the sake of the country in danger, what I had burned. I own that the note perplexed me as much as the very different note I had received twenty years earlier from the adversaries of my first protector.

If I had been a courtier, like so many other Brutuses of that day, I should have abandoned Cæsar in his misfortunes on receiving this call. But, I repeat it, I am not a seeker after favour. The more misfortune was about to strike a sovereign lady, courageously remaining in the Tuileries to face the storm that was lowering upon her, the more I felt ashamed of proposals made to me by her most implacable enemy.

And yet my first protector addressed me personally in the name of the country in danger. France had more claim upon me than an Empress whose dangers came, after all, from her fault or that of her husband. Was I to imitate the attitude of the officials I saw around me? Or was I to turn to whence the wind blew that would strike down the master and follow its current with damnable ambition?

In this perplexity I resolved to go and see Mme. X——, whose position, I thought, would be as difficult as mine. I would get her ideas, though quite determined not to tell her of the proposals of M. Thiers, whom she execrated. I would take counsel with her to enlighten my patriotism; I would find out if her vanquished party had risen to the height of its misfortunes, and whether my duty ought still to chain me to a power so near to its fall.

I found Mme. X—— in her house at Auteuil. She

was much excited, very busy, very nervous; when she saw me, standing among piles of furniture in her vestibule, she scarcely bowed to me. Accustomed to read countenances, I saw on hers that my presence was very inopportune to her; she remembered my beginnings and how she had always *flaired* me as an Orléanist.

"Oh! it is you, is it?" she said with a haughty air; "*you* here at such a moment! Politics must leave you plenty of leisure if you can find time to come out here, especially when any one who belongs to the Château must be a very dangerous acquaintance for you and your friends."

I did not need the end of her sentence to make me understand her ill humour.

"My dear friend," I said, "it is because I foresee the dangers which threaten you in the camp to which you so charitably consign me that I have come to see you and find a way to avoid them."

"You are very good," she said, taking me into the salon and deigning to give up attending to her furniture; "you are very good. But permit me only half to believe you. You have come, have you not, to make yourself quite sure of the coming triumph of your friends? to make certain that the Empire is, as I told you six months ago it would be,—*fichu, archi-fichu!* Well, be sure of it! You see I am packing up to go. I don't intend to await Prussian bayonets, or the return of your avengers of December—"

"But," I interrupted, for I did not think the Empire

had quite come to that; at least not in the minds of its most ardent supporters; "but the Empress is still at the Tuileries; she is guarded there by General Trochu."

"The Empress will depart, just as I do. General Trochu will go over to his new sovereign, the Republic — that good wet-nurse for embryo pretenders!"

"You are in a very bad humour," I said; "it was not thus that I knew you in the olden time when we mutually helped each other."

"Well," she retorted in a milder though still embittered tone, "you don't need my help any longer, as I shall never belong to the government that is about to be born. You ought even to forget my friendship, or it will injure you with Thiers."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "how can you misunderstand me in that way?"

"I don't blame you," she said; "I blame no one but the Emperor. Why did he make war? He had only to let himself die tranquilly without going after Émile Ollivier! He had only to keep his power, his authority, without trying to break it, like a child with a plaything he has played with too long! Ha! he *has broken it* — that plaything so splendidly made by Morny, Espinasse, Billault, and Rouher — broken it just to see what was inside of it! Well, he knows now what has come out of it — Ollivier, war, defeat; presently it will be Thiers and revolution; after Thiers will come Gambetta, Rochefort, and — I don't know who! But after war, after revolution, the Empire will *return* to

play its old game with new trump-cards. Then, you Orléanists, *then* we 'll attend to you ! As for me, good-bye, I 'm off, awaiting better days."

" Where are you going ? " I said, provoked because I saw I could not get a sensible word out of her.

" How do I know ? " she answered angrily. " I am getting out of Paris in the first place because Paris, whatever happens, left to itself will become a furnace."

" But," I said, " you are flying into the face of invasion. The Prussians are advancing from all points along the frontier. Another defeat and the million of Germans who now surround the Ardennes will turn Metz and march on Paris."

" Well, what then ? " she said, giving me a sarcastic look.

" What then ? Why you will have everything to fear if you fall into their hands."

" How young you are still ! " she cried, shrugging her shoulders. " Do you think that danger exists for me ? If I desert Paris which is deserting *us*, I am only going to Ville d'Avray where I possess a property I want to save from the coming disasters. They say that Prussians only pillage and burn empty houses. They are said to be very courteous to those who do them the honours of their house. Now for my own sake and the interests of others, that 's the course I mean to take, and I shall take it."

" Do you think that patriotic ? " I asked.

" I don't know anything about that," she retorted.

"What I *do* know is that Thiers and his consorts will be vanquished after the revolution as we are vanquished to-day."

"You talk as if the Empire were already in the dust."

"It will be to-morrow!" she exclaimed.

"No, for there is another battle to be fought between McMahon's army and the Prussians. We are not yet vanquished!"

"We *are*—and you know it!" she cried. "And when Prussia by a final victory justifies Thiers, who has never ceased to predict our defeat in the Chamber, and opens the doors of the Tuileries, you think perhaps it is you — you Orléanists — who will profit by our defeat. I tell you no! no!"

"Why not?" I asked.

"Why not? because we Bonapartists will return."

"On the Prussian gun-carriages?"

"Don't talk nonsense," she replied. "You know very well that a nation, whether she wills it or does not will it, belongs to her conqueror. Well, we Bonapartists, more conquered by you than by the Prussians, we shall say what we like to win back the public opinion you have taken from us. We shall say that if it had not been for the revolution Europe would have intervened; we shall say that the legal government issuing twice from the suffrages of the people was not consulted as to continuing the war! Then in presence of the enemy, who will have become much more yours than ours, we shall demand an appeal to the people."

"But," I cried out indignantly, "that will be civil war in the midst of invasion! It would be a crime. Suppose France should succumb?"

"Ha! my dear man," she cried, pushing me on to the veranda piled up with furniture; "you are getting tiresome, stupid, with your worn-out phrases! Where do you come from? What is it, the France you talk of? Does a woman — a woman of my profession — have a country? She has a master; and mine is the Empire which I serve, loyally, by all the means in my power. That is why you see me on the point of quitting Paris — the Empress also. By the way your friends and the Prussians are driving things, I have scarcely time to pack my trunks. So, good-bye, my dear Claude, may we meet again in better days — you will find me then as ready to serve you as I have been in the past."

I own I was as glad to leave her as she was to be rid of me. I was horror-struck at the profession of faith of Mme. X——, who, seeing her fortune and that of her masters crumbling away, suddenly unmasked herself before me. In spite of her intelligence, her energy, she appeared to me such as I would fain not have seen her — as a cynical woman.

My mind was made up. On the day when Paris heard of the defeat at Sedan, I left the Prefecture; not to abandon it disguised as a cook like my Prefect, but to answer the note of M. Thiers. That morning I had received a letter from Bagasse. It will be remembered that I had left at Verdun the police escort that accompanied the baggage-train of His Majesty. Thanks to

that escort, I was one of the first in Paris to know of the rout of our army.

All the officers of the Prefecture were in such disorder by this time that I was obliged to take upon myself personally the authority to make the various police posts, within and without, attend to their functions. My chiefs no longer attended to anything but their own affairs. On the eve of the great overthrow, I found myself almost alone in the office of the Secretary of the Prefect of Police. I had even to examine the correspondence in order to keep up between the Prefecture and the Ministry of the Interior the necessary administrative relations, which were certainly not within my province.

But on the evening before September 4, no one was at his post; it is absolutely true that no one had awaited the downfall.

As the police had played a great rôle with the army, I was informed almost daily by Bagasse or my other agents of what was happening on the Meuse, in the Ardennes, and even on the banks of the Rhine. I was as fully informed about the affairs of the war as the Minister himself. I had no difficulty, alas! in detecting the lying news with which the Parisians were fooled, in order to maintain, in the name of their patriotism, the Empress-Regent in the Tuileries. I was thus the first to hear of the disaster of Sedan from Bagasse and the *Requin*, who had not ceased to accompany the Emperor from Metz to Verdun (where I left them) and from Verdun to Sedan.

When Bagasse and the escort started from Verdun

with the state-carriages, the household suite, the stenographers, the cooks, the kitchen utensils, etc., of His Majesty, they went through dangers quite as serious as those I had shared with them after Forbach. This time it was not only against the enemy that my men had to take precautions; they were needed against Frenchmen. Seeing the imperial train about to start with the fleeing sovereign, some of the soldiers who had fought at Wissembourg, heeding only their rage and their despair, aimed their rifles at the Emperor. Bagasse wrote me as follows:

"If an officer who was on the train had not sprung off with his breast against the muzzles that were aimed at the Emperor, it would have been all up with him. 'Soldiers!' cried the officer; 'you are unhappy men, but do not be murderers.'"

Three days later than this letter from Bagasse I received another from him, dated Sedan. It announced a new retreat of the army. It also informed me that the fifty cars of His Majesty's baggage-train had been brought into Sedan without much damage, but that the army had met a different fate. His next letter announced the capitulation and the capture of him who was henceforth no longer an emperor.

I confess that when I thus learned, with many of its details, this frightful catastrophe, I had a species of vertigo. Nevertheless, the solitude and isolation in which my chiefs at the Prefecture had left me showed me clearly my duty. In this supreme hour, which sounded the death-knell of the imperial dynasty, France

could not be kept on the second line. I knew too well the just grievances of the Opposition, the patriotism of the Parisian population, not to put myself definitively on the side of the outraged nation. I decided then to go and see M. Thiers.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the short interview that I had with the old politician when I went to him at the moment I had received news of our great disaster. Had he heard of it? I did not know. But the extreme agitation in which I found him, the leader of the Opposition, made me suppose that he *had* heard it.

I entered the house in the rue Saint-Georges, the broken windows of which, broken by the "patriotic manifestation" of the friends of the Empire against the adversaries of the war, were scarcely mended. I had no sooner sent in my name than M. Thiers, his face pale, his features convulsed, came eagerly to me and took me into his private room.

"My dear Claude," he said in a clear, vibrant, yet shaking voice, "I wrote to you under the expectation of grave events which might put the country in danger. To-day, since I wrote to you, events so terrible have happened that I seem to have lost my head. We have a session of the Chamber to-night. I don't know what will take place; I dare not even think about it. As we have long known you — as I know above all your patriotism, your loyalty — I wished — I wish still, to ask you whether, in the horrible catastrophe before us, you will be on the side of the Emperor or on the side of France?"

"My answer," I said solemnly, "is given, Monsieur Theirs, by the fact that you see me here."

"Thank you!" he said, pressing my hand warmly; "you are a good Frenchman."

"And now," I said, "what am I to do?"

"Remain at your post and await events."

"But," I objected, "suppose the revolution turns me out?"

"It will not turn you out."

"Suppose my present chiefs compel me once more to act against you?"

"Your chiefs will not dare to give you an order against me; I'll answer for that—if indeed you have those same chiefs to-morrow!"

"Then what will be my situation?"

"That of waiting for your new Prefect."

"Then," I cried out in surprise, "then you know all, Monsieur Thiers?"

"All!" he answered, waving his arm with a gesture of despair, and wiping under his spectacles the tears that rolled from his eyes, while his voice could not restrain a sob. "All—alas!"

The diplomatist had disappeared: I saw only the patriot, shaken, agitated before the sorrows of his country.

"Go!" he said, pushing me hastily by the shoulders; "*au revoir*, my poor friend; I count on you to keep order in Paris, while those who have ruined the country abandon it on the brink of the abyss to which they have dragged it."

This interview between M. Thiers and me took place on the evening of the 3d of September, when the Minister of War, after the news of the capture of Napoleon III had been transmitted to him by the Empress, had just convoked the Chamber to tell it that the army had capitulated, and that the Emperor was a prisoner.

We all know what happened on the announcement of that terrible news. Jules Favre answered the Minister, the Comte de Palikao, by declaring:

"Louis Napoleon Bonaparte and his dynasty are deprived of the powers conferred on them by the Constitution. . . ."

Jules Favre ended by saying slowly to the friends of the Empire, who listened to him as condemned men listen to their death-sentence:

"To-morrow — or rather to-day, Sunday, at midday, we shall have the honour to state publicly the imperative, the absolute reason which commands all patriots to adopt that declaration."

When I left M. Thiers that evening and walked through the streets, I perceived that Paris, long secretly worked upon by the permanent leaders of revolution, was already in possession of the dreadful news. An enormous crowd was circulating along the line of the boulevards, whispering at each corner. Manifestations of sorrow were universal, coupled with deep, growling anger. It seemed to me then, just as it did in 1848, and in the days of June, that the people were waiting for the word of command, which the leaders of the revolution dared not give as yet while the country mourned.

I heard, in all the groups, voices that restrained the furious ones; sad voices saying:

"Be calm. Not to-night. To-morrow! Then we shall see! we shall see!"

When I reached the Prefecture, I was immediately summoned by the Chief of the Political Police, M. Lagrange. It was the last time that I saw him. He received me in the antechamber of his office. He was dressed as a traveller prepared to take a railway journey. He said to me:

"Monsieur Claude, you know what has happened. At midnight there is a special session of the Chamber to announce the capture of His Majesty. Our Prefect, by the advice of the Minister of the Interior, has taken all necessary precautions that order be not disturbed. Neither the Prefect, nor the Minister, nor I, can have any effect on the population, for I know very well that to-morrow all Paris will be beside itself and outside of the law. Men like us, faithful under misfortune, will be suspected. All we can do is to group ourselves at the Tuileries, with General Trochu around the Empress-Regent. In the name of order, *you* must act, Monsieur Claude,—*you who have nothing to fear*, as I myself would act,—in the interests of the population. See that order reigns in Paris. Give your whole care to that; as for us, we should only aggravate the situation."

Before I could say a single word in reply M. Lagrange had left me. Under the grave responsibility thus suddenly put upon me I wished to consult my

superiors. I went up to the offices of the General Direction of the Prefecture. I found them deserted. It was now one o'clock in the morning. The night session of the Chamber had already begun. Jules Favre had proclaimed the overthrow of the Empire.

During the first shock of indignation that ran through Paris from midnight to midday and transformed, without the shedding of a single drop of blood, Imperial France into Republican France, I did not quit the Prefecture. Trusting to the promise of M. Thiers, and faithful to the request of my former superior, I remained at my post, awaiting events, to ward off violence from whatever quarter it came. I ought to say, to the equal honour of the vanquished party and the triumphant party, that I simply had to continue under the new power the service laid upon me by the departing régime.

After the morning session of the last Assembly of the Empire, which ended as a Republican Assembly, I received an anonymous note, the handwriting of which I knew perfectly well. It announced to me the coming of a new Prefect whose orders I was to obey. This was the Comte de Kératry, who, in the Assembly, had just interpellated the fallen power on the military arrangements made against the people of Paris — an interpellation that forced General Trochu to abandon his post at the Tuileries and go to the Hôtel de Ville. As a reward for M. de Kératry's action the new mixed government (improvised in the offices of the Legislative Chamber) appointed him on the spot as Prefect of Police.

While awaiting the orders of the new Prefect thus appointed by the Republican Government, — or, as it was then called, the Government of National Defence, — I continued to execute the orders of my former chiefs. In sending, under command of certain officers, eight hundred policemen to guard the approaches to the Chamber, I was careful to select as their leaders men who had not belonged to the former political brigade. I also watched that the neighbourhood of the Prefecture should have a tranquil air, as if nothing abnormal were taking place in Paris.

I was notified that the National Guard had been called out by the Deputies of the Left. The total absence of my late chiefs showed me plainly that the evolution into a new government was an accomplished fact, and that the question was much more protection against its too ardent disciples than precautions against the fallen Empire. I had too much experience in revolutions not to act under the directions of the anonymous note which had come to me from the transformed Chamber.

At that crucial moment, the Chamber called up all the men of the Revolution of 1848. Jules Favre, Thiers, Crémieux, Étienne Arago, and Garnier-Pagès became a tutelary and temporising power against the impatient spirits of Belleville. To the younger ones — Gambetta, Rochefort, etc. — were given only secondary rôles. It now became a vital question of how to unite, in the name of military fraternity, the army under Trochu, the police under Kératry, and the National Guard

against the soldiers of Flourens and Blanqui, against the Republicans of Belleville and La Villette.

The Revolution of September 4, 1871, was accomplished without a shot being exchanged, because the most perfect order never ceased to be maintained between the people, half-stunned by the frightful defeat, and the members of the legislative body. It is true that the police whom I had sent under the orders of my former chiefs, and the citizens, sent by order of their "centurions," eyed each other suspiciously; but when the news spread that the National Guard had been called out to protect the revolution, and when the populace saw advancing among them none but the deputies who had voted against the war, the crowd calmed down. And it remained calm because not a minister, not a deputy of the imperialist majority showed himself on the Place de la Concorde.

When the National Guard arrived, it was headed by a carriage in which were three deputies in uniform in order to encourage the fraternizing of the civil guard with the military guard under General Trochu. For a moment every one thought there would be fighting between the Nationals and the Garde de Paris, which was stationed at the end of the bridge. The officer in command of the latter seemed to hesitate. Forty thousand eyes were fixed upon him. There was an instant of terrible suspense. Then the officer, suddenly turning his eyes to the dome of the Tuileries, saw that the flag no longer floated from it and called to his men: "Sheathe sabres!" and the danger was over.

During this time, the Prefecture was not forgotten. I had not left it all night. After midday a company of the third arrondissement arrived, led by the Comte de Kératry. My new Prefect came to take possession of his post. I did the honours in receiving him. He greeted me with great cordiality, the secret of which came from my interview the night before with M. Thiers. It was now about three o'clock.

As soon as my new Prefect had taken possession of the Prefecture, his first care was to affix the seals in the offices of the late Prefect and of the Chief of the Political Division, both of whom, as I have said, had fled. As soon as this ceremony began, I was struck, like every one else, with the disorder that reigned in the private rooms; a disorder that explained why, during the last two days, the heads of the administration at the Prefecture had received no one, and why all the chimneys of the Prefecture had smoked.

Traces of destruction, or of abduction, were everywhere visible. The book-cases, the closets, the drawers of the desks and writing-tables were empty. On the shelves were fifty or more boxes, from which all documents had been taken. On the tables lay, pell-mell, the registers and record-books, from which leaves had been torn. The stoves, the fireplaces, were choked with papers either reduced to ashes or blackened by flames. For the last few days my chiefs, preparatory to departure, had destroyed everything that could compromise the servants of the Empire.

I now received from my new Prefect an order to go

to the Tuileries, which the Empress had left that morning. She departed, as all other fallen sovereigns of that palace had departed, at the moment when she least expected to go. She went because, wishing herself to resist the revolution, she found none around her but men who, from the least to the greatest, had all lost their heads. As she left the palace she said, justly and bitterly:

"No one should be unfortunate in France, where every one abandons them!"

I could now look coolly at the situation of the new government which I was about to serve. The order I had received to go to the Tuileries, invaded by the people, showed me plainly the rôle I was expected to play, namely, to control the rear-guard of the revolution.

Was M. Thiers playing at this moment, in 1870, the part that Lamartine had played in 1848?

At any rate, I, former servant of the Empire, had grown in importance within a few hours, solely because I had become the body-guard of the leaders improvised on the 4th of September. The Comte de Kératry sent me to the Tuileries with a company of resolute men, old soldiers of the last reign, so that the friends of Flourens and Blanqui should not enthrone themselves in the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville, as they had already done at the Palais Bourbon. The Parisian *bourgeoisie* had good reason to be afraid of the revolution (an act of justice, however), because behind it was the Red Spectre, and behind the Red Spectre was the Prussian helmet!

And who, and what were the men who put themselves at the head of the great heroic movement of Paris, stirred by patriotism? Jules Favre, Crémieux, Étienne Arago, Garnier-Pagès — the Ghosts of the Revolution of 1848!

What was I, myself, in this great popular movement? A faithful servant, a sincere patriot, it is true, but one who, by reason of my age, my past, and my convictions, was thrust into a path foreign to my nature and to my convictions.

Alas! the revolution, which had caused a phantom of power to vanish, was led by none but Phantoms! Meanwhile, the Prussians were advancing!

CHAPTER XX

INSTALLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SEPTEMBER 4

WHEN I reached the Tuileries with my agents I found I had no police work to do in protecting the palace from invaders. The dramatic author, Sardou, had taken that care upon himself. When I entered the garden filled with an immense crowd I heard, mingled with cries of *Vive la République!* shouts of *Vive Sardou!* I own that in the gravity of events, in the terrible situation of France, the apparition of this dramatic writer seemed to me a little anomalous; it gave me a sad sense of the levity of Parisians who carry the burlesque even into solemn drama, — for the Parisian amuses himself, and would forever amuse himself, had he his feet in blood! Did he not dance around the guillotine of '93? Did he not give concerts in the palace of the Tuileries the night before the day on which the Commune burned it in 1871?

The crowd applauded the dramatic author who, they said, had led with bared head and naked breast the National Guard against the Imperial Guard. Possibly they applauded, because the author's profile bore like-

ness to the Bonaparte of the great days, and the sight came to them at the moment when they were driving from the Tuileries the man who was but a caricature of the great Bonaparte.

However that may have been, Sardou's initiative in occupying the Tuileries the instant the Empress left it was a good thing. He, who did not aspire to enter the Government, was prompted to play the part of hero on the barricades by the same object that I had, namely, to protect the Tuileries from thieves and incendiaries. His act was, as I suppose, a dramatic scene which that witty mind thought opportune and useful to introduce into the great drama of Paris. Sardou transformed himself on this occasion into a lightning-rod. His presence sufficed to ward off the thunderbolt that threatened the old palace of our kings — the burning of the Tuileries was postponed for eight months!

When I entered the apartments of the palace, already guarded by the National Guard, I found them exactly as the Empress had left them an hour or two earlier. Like King Louis-Philippe, she did not abandon the Tuileries until compelled to do so by those who surrounded her. Like the ex-King she fled at her breakfast hour, but not until her regency was no longer a possible thing. I saw the table as she had left it, the egg-cup overturned which had contained the boiled egg of her simple meal.

When she left the Tuileries she was still surrounded by a few faithful friends, and by two of the foreign ambassadors, Prince Metternich and the Chevalier di

EMPRESS EUGENIE

Nigra. She did not decide to leave the palace to "the people" until the Chief of the Political Police, who had abandoned his post, came to warn her that "it was time to fly."

Even then she did not go till the National Guards, led by Sardou, entered the palace in spite of the efforts of General Mellinet to moderate if not to repulse them. Then it was that the Empress said the words I have already quoted: "Let no one be unfortunate in France, for every one abandons them!"

The installation of the new Government of September 4 was done peacefully and amiably. The Comte de Kératry came to the Prefecture with only one clerk. The 4th of September was a day of hand-shaking — I do not say that it was not a "day of dupes" as well. For the future Commune, which had prepared it, and the imperialists, who had dreaded it, were both thinking, from that day forth, of a revenge for what they each called a "deception" and a "usurpation of power."

The revolution of September 4 was (on a different stage) the same deception, the same "surprise," as that of February, 1848; each put off, for a time, a terrible revolution. The days of June, 1848, have for their pendant the Bloody Week [of the Commune].[1]

But the clouds would not be long, I knew, in gathering in the still clear sky of the new Republic, acclaimed

[1] It is surprising that so little is remembered and said about the Commune and its horrors. It was short, to be sure; but the atrocities and massacres then committed — committed in our own day — were even more infernal than those of the great Revolution. An account of them can be found in M. Maxime Du Camp's *Paris under the Commune.* — [Tr.]

by the French people while the Prussians were invading France! M. Thiers, whom I saw after September 4, was to me the living demonstration of what I feared.

But what of that! the 4th of September was to the people a true fête-day. They forgot, in the joy of reconquering their liberty, the enemy at their gates preparing to conquer their country. They surrounded the Hôtel de Ville, eager to gaze on Henri Rochefort, who, like the other prisoners of the Empire, was borne there in triumph to form part of the new Government. In this parliamentary revolution, Jules Favre was the incarnation of the vengeance for December, '51; Rochefort and Gambetta were the incarnation of social revenge.

I repeat, there was wide space between the Government of Jules Favre, Thiers, Crémieux, Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Trochu, etc., and that desired by the last Elected of the Opposition. The distance between them was that of the Capitol from the Tarpeian Rock, and the Revolution of Paris, which it brought about at the moment of the invasion, became a trump-card in Bismarck's hands.

I knew too well the self-interested supporters of the Empire to believe in their total disappearance. The hurricane of September 4 had swept them out of Paris only to leave them on the frontiers of France, there to concert together and await the moment for their return to the capital. I had known too well the secret springs of the riots of June, '48, the support

given in England to the Prince-Pretender, not to fear that Prussia, hating France, would make a *volte-face* in favour of her prisoner. Would it not be for Prussia an easy means of defeating those who preferred war to the death rather than accept a degrading peace? As I thought of these things the words of Mme. X—— came back to me.

What consoled me personally under the misfortunes of my country and the reckless joy of the Parisians was the importance I had gained in the wholly original situation given me by the Revolution of September; a temporising revolution, whose serene sky, though even then hot and heavy, was, alas! the forerunner of a double tempest—the Siege and the Commune. In this calm before a storm I had grown by many cubits. My long experience, my antecedents, my struggles against the occult administration of the Empire were so many titles of recommendation to the new powers. Most of them, M. de. Kératry especially, knew the ties that bound me to M. Thiers, whose hand had guided the coming revolution ever since the Ollivier Ministry began.

From the day of the installation of my new Prefect, I did all that in me lay to prove to him that I had no regrets for the fallen régime—fallen far more through public contempt than through foreign adversaries.

As soon as the Prefect received orders from the Hôtel de Ville to set at liberty the political prisoners lately condemned by the courts of justice, I hastened to exe-

cute those commands of the Government of National Defence. It certainly was a curious thing for me and my agents, who had assisted the legal officers to incarcerate Mégy, Paschal Grousset, Razoua, Trinquet, Rochefort, and others, — it was curious for us to open the doors of their prison, we who had locked those doors upon them a few months earlier!

Strange shifting of political things, which brought me to the fore and raised me only to make my ultimate fall the more terrible! It was written above that I should be, to the end, the plaything of the flux and reflux of revolutions, and that they should spare me none of the buffetings of their violent eddies.

And yet, God knows, I have never been a man of politics; I have never felt other hatreds than those inspired in me by criminals of the worst species. For my merit, my only merit, has been to discern a scoundrel at a glance through the instinctive aversion he inspired in me, whether he was the lowest of blackguards or the highest of princes.

Shortly after September 4, which had changed nothing at the Prefecture except by substituting a Republican Prefect in place of a henchman of the Empire, I was sent for by the active and indefatigable M. Thiers. I went at once to his house in the rue Saint-Georges, thinking of his luck and that of his friends, which, like mine, alas! came from the disasters of France. I was therefore much surprised to find him as peevish and morose as he had been sad and tearful on the eve of the imperial downfall.

When he saw me he frowned, crossed his arms on his breast, and advanced upon me, saying in his clearest and most strident voice:

"Ha! Monsieur Claude, fine things you are doing!"

I stood aghast and open-mouthed. For a moment I did not know what answer to make. Seeing that, he went on, smiling bitterly:

"Pardon me, my good friend; it is not you I incriminate, it is your chiefs. You — you are nothing but an instrument of the new power."

"But," I said, "am I not now with the chief of the new Government?"

"Oh!" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders and walking up and down with all the activity of his little legs. "Oh! if I was the chief of those blunderheads, it is not I who would have ordered you to let loose the political prisoners of the Empire! At the moment when Paris has n't fifteen days before her to prepare to receive the Prussians, the Government had something else to do than think about the martyrs of liberty and caress all the democratic prejudices of the people!"

At these words my mouth opened wider than ever. This speech of M. Thiers bewildered me more than his rough reception. And yet I began to understand the ill humour of my illustrious patron. He showed me its cause as soon as he let me see he was no longer master of the revolution he had produced.

For M. Thiers throughout his whole life had but one engrossing thought — to govern and feel himself master of all things. His numerous disappointments, in 1848,

in 1851, like that he felt at this moment (after having done everything to grasp the power) came solely from his inordinate desire to govern. He would have been willing to govern on a volcano! And it was because he could not act as he pleased over the crater opened by the camarilla of Gambetta that he had to govern, later, at Bordeaux over the volcano of invasion, and at Versailles over the volcano of the Commune.

"Then, Monsieur Thiers," I asked, "do you condemn me because I opened the prison doors to Rochefort, to Mégy, to —?"

"I don't condemn you, not *you*, Monsieur Claude," he replied, with a negative gesture and becoming once more good-humoured; "I condemn those who made you execute such orders. You are an arm; you are not a head. When men wish, like your chiefs, to be at the head of a nation, they need brains, especially at such a critical moment as the present — and all your chiefs are scatter-brains!"

This time I had the keynote of the situation. The illustrious statesman, who had served as reinforcement to the Republicans during the Empire, was already distrusted by the new revolution. The men of 1848, like the old "Five" of the Legislative Chamber, distrusted at this moment the former Minister of Louis-Philippe, the former head of the committee of the rue de Poitiers, the slighted author of the first Napoleonic constitution! This was why M. Thiers was not at the Hôtel de Ville, whence issued the decrees that made the various administrations act under the impulsion of a power far stronger

than that which merely signed the acts of the new Government.

"Yes," continued M. Thiers, taking no further notice of me, and resuming his habitual petulance, — "yes, they are all scatter-brains! At this moment, listen to what the people are shouting under my windows: *Vive la République!* Is the Republic what our unhappy nation ought to think of now? No! It is her existence and not the form of government that M. Jules Favre or M. Gambetta may prefer, neither of which will be satisfactory to the army, which does n't want to be launched against the people after being ground to powder by the Prussians! I see none but lawyers in the new Government, where soldiers are needed! men of the robe, forsooth, where we want men of the sword. Trochu is as tearful as Favre. As for the young ones, they are nothing but little pettifoggers; they think they can hold a sword as they hold a paper-knife. I don't see among all these lawyers who think themselves generals, and all these generals who talk like lawyers, a single statesman! And here we are in face of a Bismarck with a Moltke behind him! As for Rochefort and those others, I don't speak of them; they are nothing but flute-players! They don't suspect that in parodying the men of the Convention they insult the past and compromise the future. You must own, my dear Claude, that it is not when the nation is invaded that we want mountebanks at a fair! The Empire fell before public contempt; that sufficed. My colleagues would not listen to me when I proposed to them to

govern, in the absence of established power, under the duty of presenting a compact resistance to Germany. They preferred to give themselves a cockade which divides France before Germany — a unit to destroy us! Let the blame fall on those to whom it belongs! If I were not a Frenchman I would wash my hands of the whole concern! But I *am* a Frenchman. And so here am I, forced, at seventy years of age, to quit France and rush to all the Courts of Europe to induce them to pity our unhappy fate!"

"You, Monsieur Thiers," I exclaimed, deeply affected, "*you* quit the country when she is in such need of your ideas and your experience?"

"It is only to put them, my dear friend, to the service of the country that I quit her, — that I make myself a *colporteur* of diplomacy throughout Europe, — the political Wandering Jew of our unhappy France, in the hope of restoring to her, in the name of her glorious past, the prestige that her piteous present is causing her to lose. Ah! I expect misunderstandings, disappointments, in foreign lands! But I will take my share of punishment! Son of the Revolution, I too am devoured by that mother-in-law! Ah! when I think that she is here still, an idol! — Don't let us talk of it! I go to save France in Europe; for that end I am determined to scour the world! It is hard, hard, at my age, and to my patriotism! But what else can I do? I have confidence in no one but myself. Men shall see if my patriotism, my long experience, are right or wrong against the illusions of those lunatics — luna-

tics who think it suffices, in presence of a million of Prussians, to get drunk on the traditions of the First Republic, just as Louis Napoleon got drunk on the traditions of the First Empire. And now, my dear Claude, here is what I want of you, of your patriotism, during my absence."

Here I pricked up my ears. I knew that M. Thiers was full of self, but never did I suppose he would push the love of self to the point of fighting all that did not emanate from his system or his authority. And yet I admired the patriotism of the little man, whose lucid mind was as vigorous as at thirty years of age. I waited with lively curiosity to know what he was going to ask of me, determined to do whatever would help his diplomatic programme. I merely nodded my head, without interrupting him, and he went on, evidently pleased that I had not done so.

"While I am away from France," he said, "I shall need to know everything that is done here. Can I count upon you?"

"Yes, Monsieur Thiers, except for personal denunciations."

"It concerns France — France to be saved, and nothing else," he cried, impatiently.

"In that case," I hastened to say, "I am your man."

"I knew it!" he cried in a softened tone. "You are, like myself, an honest man, and a good Frenchman. Well, *au revoir*, my dear Claude. I shall count on your daily notes concerning the blunders our new masters will commit — daily notes, mind you; that's agreed."

"Yes; if agreed," I replied, "that I do not put names in those notes."

"You will do as you choose," he said, with a sly smile; "if I find names to put to your daily revelations, so much the worse for you."

"That is your affair — as a diplomatist," I returned, smiling in the same way.

"You will cause me a great deal more work; I, who already have too much, through the fault of others. And I must owe this increase of labour to your scruples as an honest man! Good God! how inconvenient honest men are!"

He bowed to me, and I took leave of M. Thiers, who, from that day forth, knew from me all that happened in a government which he had made, and in which he had no part. My notes must have served him later to repair the faults of the Government of September 4, which, in the name of the Republic, had the same thwarting weakness as M. Thiers himself — the love of dictatorship.

Events proved it. While changing the form of government, the men of September 4 employed the same system as the old government. The men of the Empire were worth as much as the men of the Republic — with more patriotism in their proclamations.

A revolution does not change the temperament of a people; and the French people like, above all things, to feed on illusions!

Lecture 11/8/08.

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